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EDITORIAL

"What Price MARVEL AGE?" by Jim Salicrup

It's no secret that **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** is a success. Thanks to your loyal support we're able to give you the type of magazine you've always wanted. Unfortunately, it is no longer economically possible to continue at our 25¢ price. Starting next issue **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** will cost 35¢. For that extra dime, you'll get all your favorite features, such as **the Coming Attractions**, **Newswatch**, **Behind The Lines**, **the New Talent Department**, **Marvel's Top Ten**, our unpredictable **Letters column**, plus new features like **the MARVEL AGE Interview**, and **Fred Hembeck's Page**, and of course our exclusive previews of upcoming Marvel projects, all printed on high-quality Mando Paper. We're switching to Mando Paper in an effort to achieve better, clearer reproduction of penciled artwork, black and white screened reproductions of full-color art, and photographs.

Don't forget, we doubled the amount of pages in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** seven issues ago without raising our price. Even at 35¢ we think **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** will continue to be the biggest bargain in comics. We're receiving more mail than ever before, more than any other Marvel comic, in fact, and your overwhelmingly favorable response inspires us to make this the best magazine we can. We don't intend to let you down.

Happy New Year,

JIM SALICRUP!

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MARVEL AGE™ Vol. 1, No. 14, May, 1984. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright© 1984 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 25¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate $4.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $6.00. Printed in the U.S.A. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MARVEL AGE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO MARVEL AGE, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.**

MARVEL COMING ATTRACTIONS

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Rocky Grimm, Space Ranger, by **Wilson** and **Sinnott**.

Here is a complete checklist of what's happening in all the Marvel titles bearing an August cover date. A **Limited Series** is a title which runs for a specific number of issues. A **Graphic Novel** is a trade paperback sized edition. A **Direct Sales** title is available only at selected outlets. **Shipping Date** refers to the date the comics leave the printer. A word to the wise — please tell your comics specialty shop owner which titles you wish to buy as soon as possible! Marvel Comics sell out so fast that unless your comics shop owner knows which titles you want, you might not get them!

Titles shipping **April 3**, on sale **April 24**:

THE THING #14 — Where the heck is **Benjamin J. Grimm**? He's not on Earth, that's for sure! But where the "Continuing Story of Rocky Grimm, Space Ranger" has actually *taken* the ever-lovin' blue-eyed **Thing** is anybody's guess! And whether he comes out of it *alive* is another story! Written by **John Byrne**, penciled by **Ron Wilson**, and inked by **Joe Sinnott**.

DAREDEVIL #209 — Big surprise this issue! You've been clamoring for the return of this writer to the ranks of Marvel! And you've been clamoring for **Daredevil** to face this villain once again! Now it all happens in one thrill-packed tale! Think you can stand the suspense of waiting for this once-in-a-lifetime opus to come out? Pencils by **David Muzzuchelli**, inks by **Danny Bulanadi**.

NEW MUTANTS #18 — Introducing a mysterious new mutant who will shock and astound you! But then . . . **Danielle Moonstar** has to confront her greatest fear — when the demon that slew her parents now comes after *her*! "Night of the Demon" is written by **Chris Claremont**, and penciled by a surprise artist!

KA-ZAR #33 — **The Plunderer** has just discovered a new supply of anti-metal! And unless **Ka-Zar** and **Shanna** can stop him from selling it to the highest bidder, world-wide chaos will result! But **Ka-Zar** and **Shanna** would never act against one of their own *family* — or would they? "North to Antarctica" is written by **Michael Carlin**, and penciled by **Paul Neary**! Direct Sales only. 75¢. High-quality Mando paper.

ALIEN LEGION #2 — A Legionnaire is missing! And his absence leads **Sarigar** and **Montroc** into an irreconcilable contest of wills! Meanwhile, the pirates we met last issue may *not* have been defeated . . . and there's something important that they must retrieve! Written by **Alan Zelenetz**, penciled by **Frank Cirocco**, and inked by **Terry Austin**! High-quality Baxter paper. From the Epic comics line. 32 pages. $1.50.

KITTY PRYDE AND WOLVERINE (Limited Series) #3 — Ever wonder what would happen if you put a fourteen year old kid together with an indefatigable fighting machine, sent them to Japan to unravel a mystery, and saw them meet the vilest assortment of evil emissaries imaginable? Stop wondering! Written by **Chris Claremont**, and penciled and inked by **Al Milgrom**!

MARVEL SUPER HEROES: THE SECRET WARS (Limited Series) #4 — There they all are! Together for the most uncanny confrontation of all time and space, the greatest super heroes must battle a menace too cosmic to name! And it's all for the sake of **The Beyonder**! And we don't even know who — or what — that is! This action packed history-making drama is written by **Jim Shooter**, penciled by **Mike Zeck**, and inked by **John Beatty**! 75¢. High quality Mando paper.

DREADSTAR #11 — At last — the origin of **Lord Papal**! If you've wanted to know what makes this immensely powerful being so dark, devilish, and demonic — then you simply *must* buy this issue! And we'll tell you — the hidden secrets are *not* what the ordinary man would expect! Written, penciled, and inked by **Jim Starlin**. Now in full-process color! High quality Baxter paper, from the Epic comics line. Direct Sales only. $1.50.

Titles shipping April 10, on sale May 1:

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #255 — The Red Ghost and his super apes are living in New York City! But what possible trouble could he be for Spidey? *Plenty*! And if *he* isn't enough, meet the **Silver Fox** — cat burglar extraordinaire! And if all *that* still isn't enough — you'll find out more about **Spider-Man's** mysterious new costume, in "Even a Ghost Can Fear the Night," written by **Tom DeFalco** and penciled by **Ron Frenz**! And these are Ron's *full pencils*! Wait'll you see 'em!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #296 — Trapped by an assortment of his most deadly enemies, **Captain America** must fight for the life and the sanity of his best friend, **Arnie Roth**! And that's no small feat — when you've got to contend with **Baron Zemo**, the **Red Skull**, and **Mother Superior and her Sisters of Sin**! "Things Fall Apart," written by **J. M. DeMatteis**, penciled by **Paul Neary**, and inked by **Brett Breeding**, also guest-stars **the Falcon**, **the Wasp**, and **Starfox**! Do not miss!

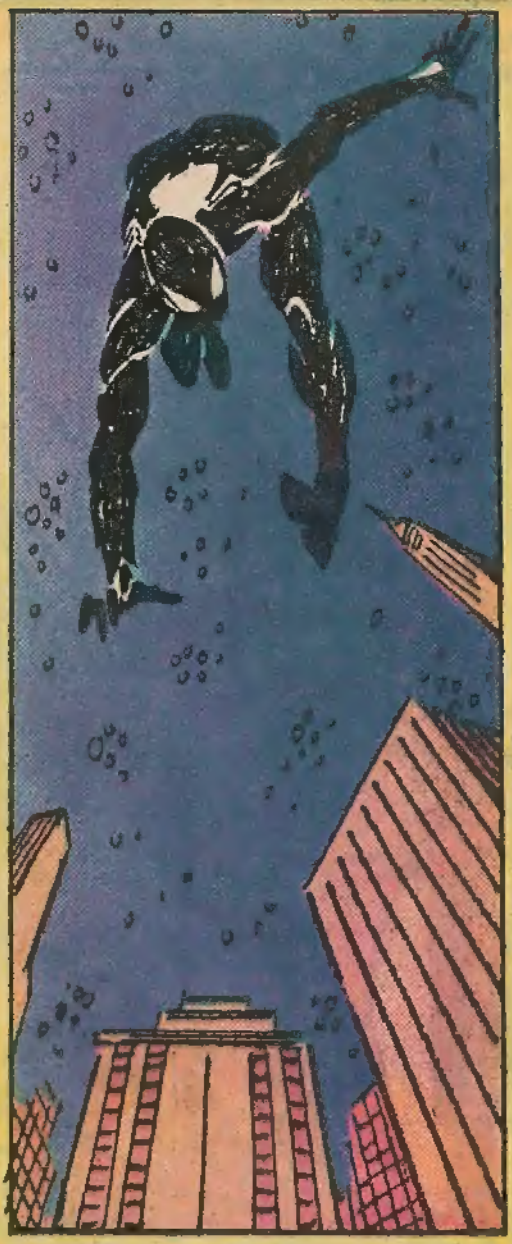
THOR #346 — **The Dark Elf** is still on Earth! He and **Thor** must scrap for the planet's very future! But there's an awesome complication to "The Wild Hunt —" and that's when you find out just what they're hunting *for*! It's a magnificent and inestimable treasure, brought to you by **Walt Simonson**, writer, penciler, and inker!

INDIANA JONES #20 — It all takes place in Europe! **Indy**, **Marion**, and **Marcus** continue their mission — track down the man who caused disgrace to the National Museum! But a Nazi spy has a mission of his own — track down and kill **Indiana Jones**! Old mysteries are solved — and new ones appear, in this spine-tingling tale by **David Michelinie**, writer, **Herb Trimpe**, penciler, and **Vince Colletta**, inker!

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #102 — Never before have you seen **Conan** humiliated — weak — cowardly! **Conan** — so meek and afraid that passersby ridicule him — and the sounds of battle make him sick! What would turn our battling barbarian into a wretched dog? We'll give you a hint — it has to do with "The Iron Lions of the Kharamun!" This thrill-soaked adventure is written by **Michael Fleisher** and drawn by **Gary Kwapisz**! $1.50. A Marvel Magazine.

DOCTOR STRANGE #66 — Who is "The Chosen One?" **Doctor Strange** must help three wise men find out! And when they do find out — hooo boy! We don't wanna give it away — but he ain't your typical, run-of-the-mill sorcerer! In fact, he's not to be believed! This off-the-beaten-path episode is written by **Roger Stern** and penciled by **Paul Smith**!

U. S. 1 (Limited Series) #11 — This is it! The secret of the **Highwayman** — revealed! If you thought you knew who he was before — you're in for a big shock! And so are our truckin' heroes! Written by **Al Milgrom**, penciled by **Frank Springer**, and inked by **Mike Esposito**!



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The New **Spider-Man**, by **Ron Frenz**.

POWER PACK #1 — Premiere issue! Four kids find themselves endowed with super powers — and begin the search for their abducted parents! Meet **Alex**, **Julie**, **Jack**, and **Katie** — also known as **Gee**, **Lightspeed**, **Mass Master**, and **the Energizer**! They're the **Power Pack** — and they're a new generation of super heroes! Origin written by **Louise Simonson**, penciled by **June Brigman**, and inked by **Bob Wiacek**!

KULL THE CONQUEROR #5 — **Kull** risks life itself! No longer able to sit idly by while a kingdom dies — **Kull** ventures out into Valusia after the Plague! And if the Plague isn't fearful enough — **Baron Kaanub** lurks, plotting death for **Kull**! Now a regular series! Written by **Alan Zelenetz**, penciled by **John Buscema**!

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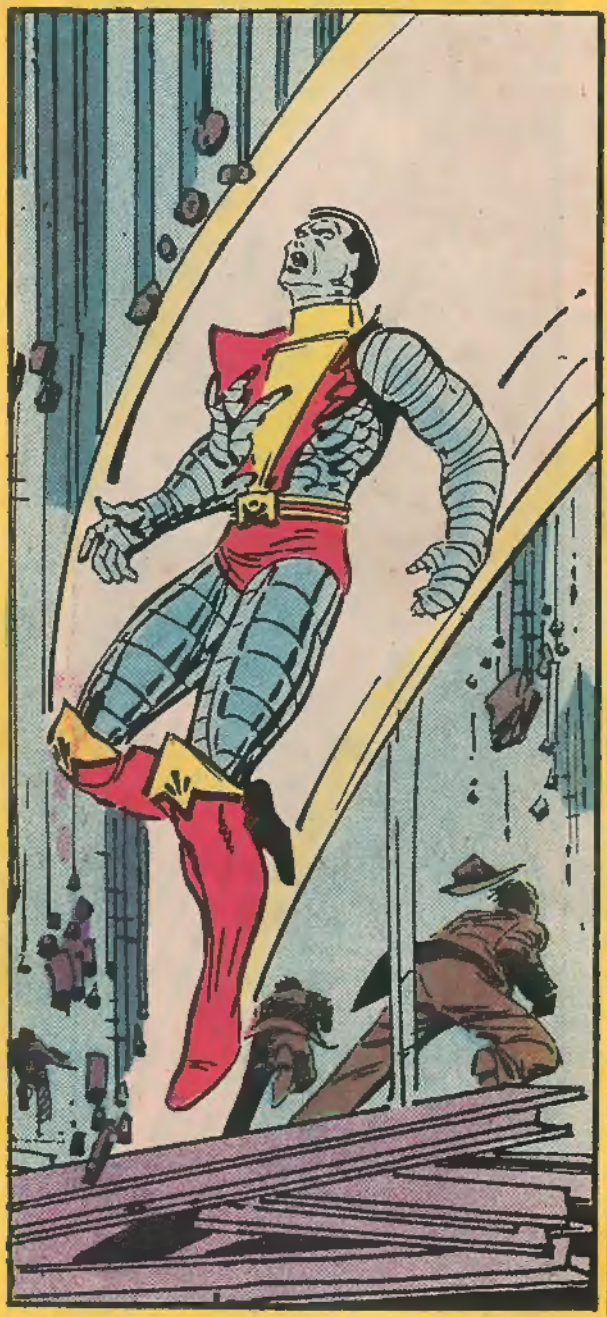

Colossus, by **John Romita, Jr.** and **Dan Green**.

Titles shipping **April 17**, on sale **May 8**:

INCREDIBLE HULK #298 — When **Nightmare** strikes, **Bruce Banner** has more to fear than sleepless nights and cold sweats — he has to contend with . . . **The Hulk**! Is it the Hulk that *is* — or **the Hulk** that *was*? Not even **Dr. Strange** can answer *that* question! The searing drama continues in "The Sleepwalker," written by **Bill Mantlo**, penciled by **Sal Buscema** and inked by **Gerry Talaoc**!

AVENGERS #246 — **The Avengers** have always been known as the Earth's Mightiest Heroes! But this day may *change* that appellation . . . when **the Avengers** meet . . . **the Eternals**! What cataclysm could cause this ancient and powerful race to take on **Cap**, **The Wasp**, **She-Hulk**, **Starfox**, **Captain Marvel**, and **the Scarlet Witch**? Find out! Buy it! Written by **Roger Stern**, penciled by **Al Milgrom**, and inked by **Joe Sinnott**!

CONAN #161 — "House of the Flaming Skulls!" **Fafnir**, the man from **Conan's** past returns! And there's some sinister force afoot — to make these life-long friends battle each other to the death! But what it is, we cannot say! Written by **Michael Fleischer**, and penciled and inked by **John Buscema**!

MARVEL TALES #166 — "The Menace of the Molten Man!" Re-presenting this classic tale from **SPIDER-MAN** #28! Story by **Stan Lee** — drawn by **Steve Ditko**!

X-MEN #184 — "Death Hunt" picks up where **NEW MUTANTS** #18 leaves off! The mysterious girl known only as **Rachel** means no harm . . . or does she? Why is she being hunted through the danger-drenched streets of New York . . . by none other than **Selene** — the mutant who preys on . . . other mutants? The answer is not the obvious! Written by **Chris Claremont**, penciled by **John Romita, Jr.**, and inked by **Dan Green**!

ROM #56 — A *new* danger threatens **Rom** — as evil and ghastly as the dreaded **Dire Wraiths**! Guest-starring **Alpha Flight**! Continuing the adventures of the gleaming, glittering, gallant spaceknight! See why writer **Bill Mantlo**, penciler **Sal Buscema**, and inker **Mel Candido** are making **ROM** the best-selling magazine of its kind, anywhere!

POWER MAN AND IRON FIST #108 — "Hammer of Judgement" features the debut of a brilliant new writer, **Alan Rowlands**! When **Luke** and **Danny** delve into the mysterious past of a rock singer, they may not find what they're looking for . . . because an inhuman monster of vengeance lurks! Penciled by **Geof Isherwood**, inked by **Andy Mushynsky**.

G.I. JOE #26 — It's too much! Not only do we finally find out the secret origin of **Snake Eyes** . . . not only do we find out the true past of **Storm Shadow** . . . we get a major revelation about **Cobra Commander**! If you're any kind of action and adventure buff, you'll *have* to pick it up! Written by **Larry Hama**, and penciled by a surprise artist!

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #17 — Instead of flowers, candy, or jewelry, buy that special someone you love a copy of **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**! It's got more artwork, news, and interviews than any smelly ol' bunch of roses — it tells you more about the Bullpen than some dumb bunch of chocolates — and it's printed on high-quality Mando paper! For only 35¢, how can you go wrong? Direct sales only.

Titles shipping **April 24**, on sale **May 15**:

FANTASTIC FOUR #269 — **Terminus** is coming! **Terminus** the terrible! **Terminus** the tyrannical! Ordinarily, the **Fantastic Four** would help out the earth in its time of crisis! But they're wrapped up with their *own* personal traumas! The outcome is too shocking to even *think* about! Also starring **She-Hulk**! Penciled, written, and inked by **John Byrne**! Also featuring the return of **Chief Wyatt Wingfoot**!

MARVEL TEAM-UP #144 — **Spider-Man** and **Moon Knight** team up, as gang wars in Chinatown bring them into a battle for honor! But with the **White Dragon** stirring things up to a fever pitch, this battle could just be **Spidey's** *last!* **Cary Burkett** wrote it, **Greg LaRocque** penciled it, and **Mike Esposito** inkedit!

IRON MAN #185 — Look, we have *no idea* how **Tony Stark** can ever return to a normal life — but he's come *this* far — so we think we'll stick around and see what happens! If only **Iron Man** himself could do so! But he can't — and it just might have something to do with this issue's surprise villain! Written by **Denny O'Neil**, penciled by **Luke McDonnell**, and inked by **Steve Mitchell**!

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #93 — when **the Kingpin** and **the Answer** need to find a more perfect assassin, you *know* **Spidey** and **the Black Cat** are in big trouble! And wait'll you see *who* that assassin turns out to *be*! Written and penciled by **Al Milgrom**, inked by **Mike Esposito**!

THE NEW DEFENDERS #134 — **The New Defenders** have nothing to fear — *do* they? When a maniacal killer comes to **the Defenders'** Aerie in the New Mexico Rockies, he brings death with him! And he brings it . . . one victim at a time! Not for the weak of heart! Plus: we've been hinting about the relationship between **Cloud** and **Moondragon**! Now you get to *see* their lives take a bizarre turn! "Manslaughter" is written by **Peter B. Gillis**, penciled by **Don Perlin**, and inked by **Kim DeMulder**!

STAR WARS #86 — Who are they? What part of the galaxy do they come from? What do they want? **Han**, **Luke**, and **Leia** better find out — or face total disaster! Written by **Jo Duffy**, penciled by **Ron Frenz**, and inked by **Tom Palmer**!

ALPHA FLIGHT #13 — "Repercussions!" The title says it all! Having suffered the most unexpected loss of all, **Alpha Flight** must do all it can just to stay alive . . . let alone try to bring about the downfall of **Omega Flight**! Written, penciled, and inked by **John Byrne**!

WHAT IF #46 — What if **Spider-Man's** Uncle **Ben** had survived? This tale of an alternate reality is written by **Peter B. Gillis** and penciled by **Ron Frenz**! Don't miss it! 48 pages. $1.

Artwork © 1984 by John Severin

High adventure by **John Severin**.

HIGH ADVENTURE #1 — Just because we love ya, we're throwing you this special one-time-only high quality adventure book! Featuring not one, but *four* tales of thrilling, fantastic amazement! "Gold!" is written by **Ann Nocenti** and penciled and inked by **Tony Salmons**, and it tells of Spanish Conquistadors who try to steal gold from Mexican Indians . . . and get a nasty come-uppance! "The Pike" written by **Steve Englehart**, and penciled and inked by **John Severin**, is set against the seventeenth century intrigue of **Oliver Cromwell's** England! "Ambrose Abernathy's Amazing Adventure Apparatus" is written by **Mike Carlin** and penciled and inked by **Gerry Talaoc**, and it stars an absent-minded inventor who just stumbles upon the most awesome contraption imaginable! It's lots of laughs! Finally, a special surprise tale by two of the biggest talents Marvel has to offer! It's all in color for $2., a full 48 pp, on high quality Baxter and Ronalds stock! Direct Sales Only.

Note: The information that appears in "Coming Attractions" is as complete and accurate as we can manage. Occasionally changes are made after this column is put together. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause!

NEWSWATCH Gusts and gales to spin your weathervane!

ITEM! Welcome aboard **Steve Saffel**! Steve is Marvel's new Assistant Promotion Manager, replacing **Lea Sapp**, who left our hallowed halls last November. A native of West Virginia, **Steve** has a bachelor's degree in journalism from West Virginia University. In additon to his background in public relations, **Steve** is a comics fan from way back. He's organized and consulted to numerous conventions in both the comics and science fiction fields! "My major interest has always been comics," confesses **Steve**, "and I've been reading Marvel comics for as long as I can remember. I've always felt that comics held great artistic potential, and Marvel has always made the best use of it! Now I have the opportunity to be a part of that effort." Best of luck, **Steve**!

ITEM! It *had* to happen! Editor in Chief **Jim Shooter** will be at the mercy of his peers when **Bob Layton** hosts "The Jim Shooter Roast" at the Atlanta Comic Festival this February! Inspired by the now-classic **FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST**, the event will feature **Tom DeFalco**, **Mike Zeck**, **John Beatty**, **John Byrne**, **John Romita, Jr.**, **Bob McLeod**, and **Butch Guice** offering their insights and quips about the world's tallest comic book editor! It all happens Saturday, February 12, at 6 p.m., at the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge at 10th Street and Interstate 75-85 in Atlanta, Georgia, and it's one of many exciting activities planned by Festival Chairman **Herb McCaulla**. Persons (or alien beings) interested in attending the convention should contact Glenwood Distributors, 2997 North Decatur Road, Decatur, Georgia 30033. All *we* can say is . . . Big **Jim** has no idea what he's in for!

ITEM! There are some big surprises in store for **DAREDEVIL**! First, the adventures of our blind swashbucklin' super hero have a new penciler! He's **David Mazzuchelli**, and we think you'll find his interpretation of ol' **Hornhead** to be pretty amazing! Next, editor **Bob Budiansky** and assistant editor **Mike Higgins** have all but finished up the deal of the century — to get a world-famous author to write a **D.D.** adventure! But the deal isn't completly final yet — so we're not allowed to tell you who it is! Which means, you'll have to just *keep reading*!

ITEM! Congratulations to **Jo Duffy** and **Laurie Sutton**! They've been promoted to Managing Editor and Associate Editor, respectively, of the Epic Comics Line! It's all part of the exciting expansion of the Epic department, so that overworked Editorial Director **Archie Goodwin** can keep up with all the great new series that Epic will be producing in 1984! Also welcome **Arlene Puentes**, Epic's newest editorial assistant! If you think that this talented group of people is going to put together some of the most extraordinary comics of all time — you guessed right!

ITEM! That's all for now, gang! Westward, ho!

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BEHIND THE LINES

Editorial Directions
by **Jim Shooter,**
Editor in Chief

Not too long ago somebody told me about a young, world class, gold medal Marvel Comics fan named **Ritchie Bakner**, who loved to draw Marvel characters, and who lived in a small Pennsylvania town.

Twenty years ago *I* was a young, world class, gold medal Marvel Comics fan who loved to draw Marvel characters, and, by George, I, too, lived in a small Pennsylvania town.

So, what the heck, I wrote to **Ritchie** and told him I'd be glad to see some of his drawings. He sent some. They were very good for a fellow his age. Good enough for me to commission him to pencil a pin-up shot for publication in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE** — a real job, which he handled and delivered like an old pro. I got **Terry Austin** to ink the drawing, which turned out pretty darn good, I think.

It saddened me greatly to learn that this talented young man suffered from an incurable disease. Recently, he passed away.

His work appears at right. I'll take the liberty of dedicating it — I know **Ritchie** wouldn't mind.

This is for everyone who dreams of drawing comics. ●

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MARVEL'S TOP TEN

by Jim Salicrup

Here are the top selling titles Marvel published with a cover date of May, 1983:

1 — **THE LIFE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**
2 — **X-MEN** #169
3 — **NEW MUTANTS** #3
4 — **DARK CRYSTAL (Limited Series)** #1
5 — **FANTASTIC FOUR** #254
6 — **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #240
7 — **AVENGERS** #231
8 — **OBNOXIO THE CLOWN VS. THE X-MEN** #1
9 — **X-MEN CLASSICS** #1
10 — **DAREDEVIL** #194

We'd like to thank **Ed Shukin** for compiling this month's list. As you know, these figures represent the best-selling titles based on total sales which include newsstands, comics specialty shops, and subscriptions.

This month's list is especially pleasing to me because, in one way or another, I was involved with several of these titles: **POPE JOHN PAUL II**, **DARK CRYSTAL**, and **OBNOXIO VS. THE X-MEN**. Not to take anything away from the creative crews who actually wrote and drew those books, but it sure feels good to know you were involved with a winner!

Marvel's much-publicized **POPE JOHN PAUL II** was #1 this month. Despite jaded critics' claims that a comic book has to include a super hero to be successful, the dramatic story of **Karol Wojtyla** was a big hit. But then, who says the Pope *isn't* a super hero?

Marvel's merry mutant mags **X-MEN** and **NEW MUTANTS** continue to hold high positions on the chart. Even the special reprint edition scored high.

Marvel's adaptation of the fantasy film **DARK CRYSTAL** introduced us to **Brett Blevins'** imaginative art style and captured the #4 spot.

FANTASTIC FOUR, **SPIDER-MAN**, and **AVENGERS** continued to hold their own on the chart, while **DAREDEVIL** dropped to the #10 spot.

CRAZY MAGAZINE's erstwhile mascot met the mutant **X-MEN** and found a spot in Marvel's top ten. For all those who've been demanding a return of **NOT BRAND ECCH**, don't think the fact that a humor mag sold as well as this will go unnoticed.

All in all, it goes to show you that Marvel's always willing to try something different to take creative and financial risks. And when they succeed, well, it gets real hard to be humble. ●

MARVEL COMING RETRACTIONS

ITEM! We goofed again! In our pronunciation guide a few issues back, we listed editor **Bob Budiansky's** name wrong! Bob's last name is pronounced Bud-ee-AN-skee, with a short **u** on the first syllable. We stand corrected!

Daredevil — consistently one of Marvel's greatest!

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- ☐ DEFENDERS
- ☐ DR. STRANGE
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR
- ☐ G.I. JOE
- ☐ INCREDIBLE HULK
- ☐ INDIANA JONES
- ☐ IRON MAN
- ☐ MARVEL TALES
- ☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP
- ☐ NEW MUTANTS
- ☐ PETER PARKER
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- ☐ THOR
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MARVEL AGE Talks to John Byrne

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by Mark Lerer

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE has gotten more requests for an interview with **John Byrne** than any other Bullpen personality. Meet the talented and articulate writer / artist who chronicles the adventures of the **Fantastic Four** and **Alpha Flight**.

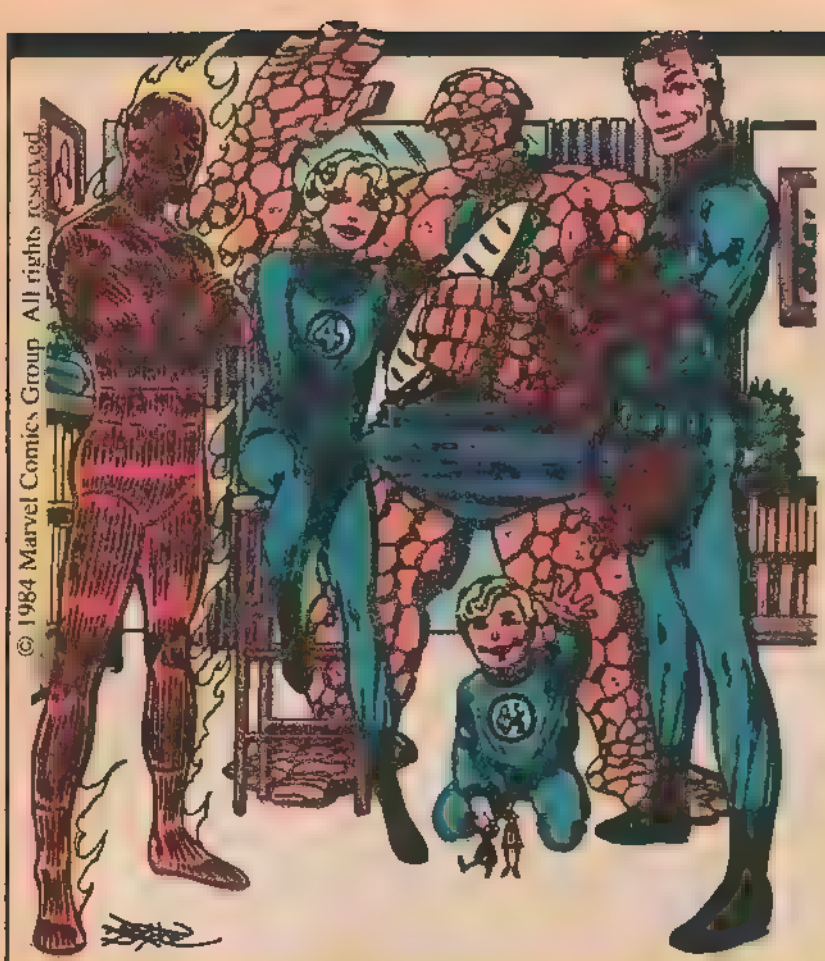
*What's a typical day like for **John Byrne**?*

The alarm clock goes off at 6:45 AM. I have breakfast. I'm at the drawing board by eight or eight thirty, and I work til about 11:30 or noon, when I break for lunch. I like to be back at work not too much later than noon, and then I work through until four o'clock, or until I have three pages done, whichever comes first. The whole thing begins again the next day when the alarm goes off at 6:45!

Where do you live?

I live in Brooklyn Heights with my wife **Andrea** and my step-daughter **Kate**. My house overlooks the promenade along the East River, so I have a beautiful view of the southern end of Manhattan. Whenever I need New York reference, it's right there for me!

We moved here recently from Evanston, Illinois, just outside Chicago. That's where I met my wife — at a comic convention, in fact! It was the July Chicago Comic Con of 1980. **Andrea**, who is an actress, had gotten tickets to the con from the stage manager of **Warp**, which was playing in Chicago at the time. It was her first experience with the world of comics, and it was pretty strange for



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her! We got married in November of that year. Andy's acting career has been successful — many people don't know that Chicago, along with Los Angeles and New York, is one of the three major places where they shoot TV commercials. She was doing so well that we thought we'd try her luck out on the East Coast — and it was certainly no inconvenience for me to move even closer to the Marvel Bullpen — so here we are. **Andy**, **Kate**, and I are all very happy.

Where are you from originally?

I was born, thirty-three years ago, in England, in a town called West Bromwich, near Birmingham, in the midlands. I'm an only child, no brothers or sisters. I was raised there and in Canada, in towns called Edmonton and Calgary, in the western part of the continent — straight north of Denver.

How did you first get into comics?

My first experience with comics had to be when I was a kid in England. I remember the Superman TV show, which starred **George Reeves**, and seeing the **SUPERMAN** comic. After we moved to Canada, I found the rest of the **SUPERMAN** books. I remember reading the first **Supergirl** story, in fact.

Just before I turned twelve, in Edmonton, I found **FANTASTIC FOUR** #5. It blew me away. First of all, the artwork was like nothing I had ever seen. It was more exciting, more *alive* — not necessarily more realistic, but more *alive* — than other comics. Second, it was a full-length story — not three little eight-pagers! That bowled me over. And, to top it all off, the action took place in New York! I knew that there was no such place as Metropolis, but I knew that there was a New York — I had been there! The boat docked on the several trips we had made coming over from England! Think of it — a twelve year old kid living in the middle of nowhere reading about this fantastic adventure taking place in an actual city. It made me wonder if it could be real.

I waited a lifetime for **F.F.** #6 to come out! I was hooked. Of course, I soon discovered the rest of the Marvel line — but because my parents restricted how much money I could spend on comics, I couldn't collect all of them. The **AVENGERS** was a godsend — I couldn't afford to buy the **HULK**, **THOR**, and **IRON MAN** — and there they all were in one comic book! You know, years later, when I began to collect comics again, it took me a long time to start picking up the **HULK**, **THOR**, and **IRON MAN** — funny how that old preconditioning can stay with you.

When I was about fifteen, I stopped buying comics and got into other things. I rediscovered Marvel when I was twenty-two and started buying up all the back issues that I had missed. Hey, maybe you can make some sense out of this old "thirty-two" thing that's been following me around all my career — I stopped reading comics with **FANTASTIC FOUR** #32, I started again with **F.F.** #132, and the first issue that I wrote and drew was #232. Think it means anything?

How did you start writing and drawing?

Well, I started drawing when I was a very small child. I remember sitting on my grandfather's lap, drawing a picture of a horse on a chalkboard as he guided my hand. My parents still have that chalkboard drawing. It's the earliest known **John Byrne** original! I'm almost entirely self-taught as an artist, except for a while when I attended the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. I didn't really publish much "fan" art at all. Around 1975, I did do some drawings for a fanzine called **CPL**, which also helped launch the careers of **Roger Stern** and **Bob Layton**. But I went professional so soon after that — that very year, in fact — that I would call that my "non-pro" as opposed to my "fan" period. Within a few months, I was working for Charlton, and then I began drawing for Marvel.

But I really started out to be a writer! I was very involved with science fiction in high school, and during that time, at about age fifteen or sixteen, I wrote about fifteen novels and it must be over five hundred short stories. My parents' closet is still full of them! The good ones eventually got turned into comic book stories, by the way — for example, the **Galactus** story in **FANTASTIC FOUR** #262 is based on one of those old stories I wrote then.

I'm particularly a fan of **Isaac Asimov's** *Foundation* trilogy — which I insist is *still* a trilogy —

and his robot novels, such as *I, Robot*. *Lord of Light* by **Roger Zelazny**, and *Ringworld*, by **Larry Niven**, particularly influenced me. **Larry Niven** is a great guy, by the way, and a good friend of mine. He tells me he's a **John Byrne** fan, too!

What's your advice to beginning artists and writers?

First, learn to draw by looking at the world, not just at comics. Every professional will advise anyone who wants to enter the business to draw what's out in the world. If you can draw the world, we can teach you to draw super heroes.

As for writing — I learned the same important things from my favorite science fiction authors that I did from **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby's FANTASTIC FOUR**. Character is more important than cosmic. The people in the story, and their reactions, are more important than the colossal event. You've heard this all before, I'm sure, but it bears repeating — concentrate more on the "Man" than on the "Super."

For writers and artists who are entering the business right now, I'll share a rule of thumb I followed when I took over the **FANTASTIC FOUR**. Turn the clock back. Get back and see fresh what it was that made the book great at its inception. Find that, and translate it into 1980's concepts. Don't just tack the 1980's concepts on.

*Being the writer and artist for **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** is a coveted job. How do most people react when you tell them what you do for a living?*

I'll tell you, it usually takes a twenty-minute sermon to explain to people what I do, because most people don't know how comics are made — that they don't spring full blown from the brow of Zeus! I get tired of explaining — so when someone at a party asks me what I do for a living, I usually make some gag up! I'll tell them I'm a gynecologist or something. Eventually, though, if I'm getting to know someone, they'll wheedle it out of me that I'm a comic book artist. If they know the **Fantastic Four**, or if they've heard of Marvel, they're usually impressed. It's neat.

What's really fun is meeting friends and co-workers of my actress wife's. I'm really impressed when I meet actors and famous people. **Ron Parady** of *Hill Street Blues*, is a friend, and I've met more *brothers* and *sisters* of famous people than I can even recall! Sometimes these people know my work, and that's always fun and gratifying.

How do you go about plotting the F.F.?

I have the **FANTASTIC FOUR** roughly plotted out for about a year in advance. The same goes for **THE THING**, and I generally have **ALPHA FLIGHT** plotted out about six months or so in advance. I'm always kicking around the ideas in my head for how to go with the series, what directions the book will take, and what villains and new characters will appear. Before I begin writing each issue, I turn in a written plot and meet with the editor. **Bob Budiansky**, for the **F.F.** and **THING**, and **Denny O'Neil**, for **ALPHA FLIGHT**, help me fine tune the plot.

*What's in store for **the Fantastic Four**?*

They're going through a very difficult time right now. They'll suffer a terrible loss, the most traumatic tragedy of their careers. The repercussions are devastating, but the four deal with it realistically, and they do continue as a team.

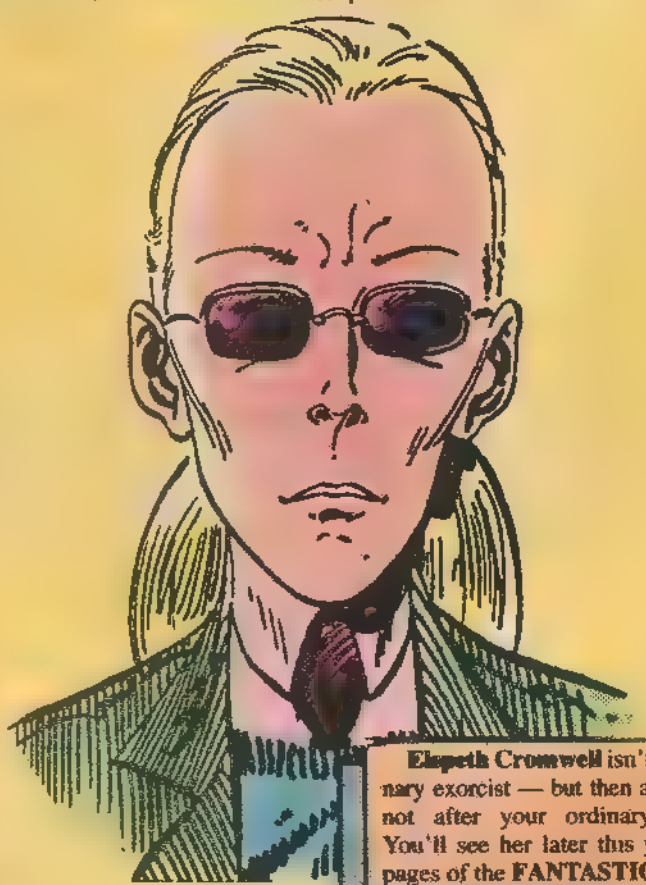
Their lives aren't going to get easier. The same week that they suffer this loss, **Terminus** arrives on Earth. He's really a cosmic sleazebag. **Galactus** may eat planets in order to survive, but Terminus has no such nobility. He pillages planets, selling the populations into slavery and stealing the planet's natural resources. He's just basically rotten and evil.

She-Hulk, as you know, is the newest member of the team, temporarily replacing **Ben**. All this hits her during her first week on the job, and the way she reacts to it all should reveal quite a bit about her. Speaking of revealing, **She-Hulk** will appear in a solo story in **F.F.** #276, when a helicopter pilot catches her sunbathing on top of the Baxter Building!

In the middle of all these events, also, **the Fantastic Four** have to contend with **Dr. Doom**!

*But **Dr. Doom** is dead!*

I know.



Elspeth Cromwell isn't your ordinary exorcist — but then again, she's not after your ordinary witches! You'll see her later this year in the pages of the **FANTASTIC FOUR**!

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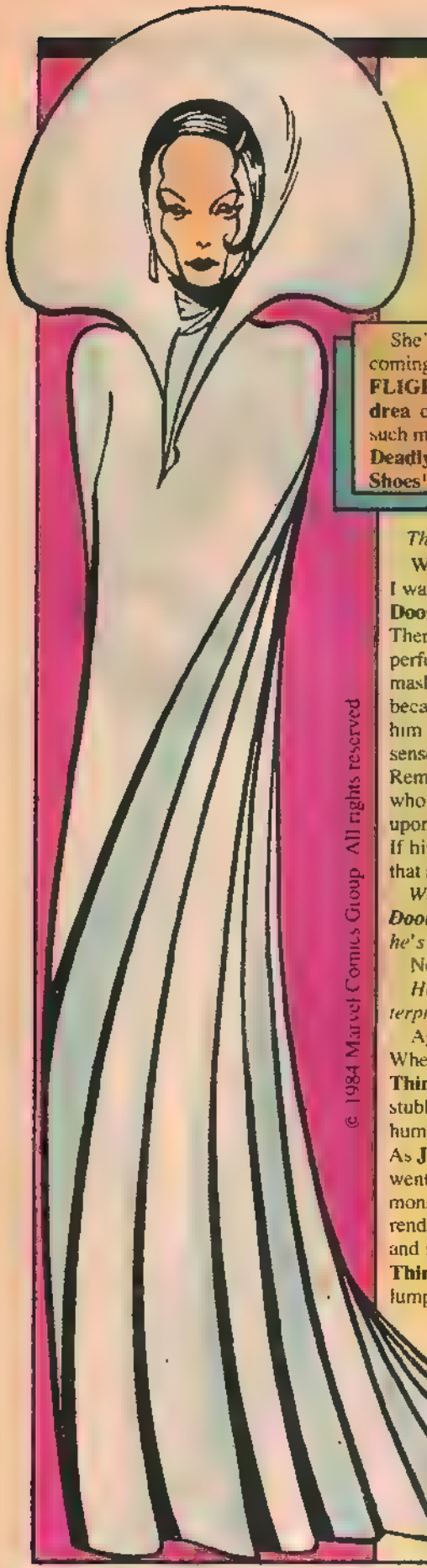

She's **Gilded Lily** — and she's coming up in the pages of **ALPHA FLIGHT**! **John's** lovely wife **Andrea** created her — as she created such memorable characters as **Puck**, **Deadly Ernest**, and **Goody Two-Shoes**!

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*Then is it **Dr. Doom** or isn't it?*

Well, yes . . and no. By the way, I want to clear up a rumor about **Dr. Doom's** face. His face is a mess. There was a rumor that he was a perfectly handsome man under the mask, except for one scar which, because of his tremendous ego, made him feel hideously disfigured. Nonsense. He *is* hideously disfigured. Remember, when the Tibetan monks who raised him first placed the mask upon his face, the metal was still hot! If his face wasn't misshapen before, that alone would do it.

*We still want to know if it's **Dr. Doom** or not, and how it can be if he's dead.*

Next question, please!

*How did you come up with your interpretation of **The Thing?***

Again, I turned the clock back. When **Ben Grimm** first became **the Thing**, his arms, legs, and head were stubby, and not proportioned like a human being's. He was a monster. As **Joe Sinnott** has said, as the years went by **Ben** gradually turned from a monster into teddy bear. Now my rendition of **the Thing** has him rocky and not lumpy, but I want the rocky **Thing** to work and move like the lumpy **Thing** did. His proportions are *not* human. He's really shaped more like a starfish than a human being, and he doesn't move or function as he would were he human.

This is why **Ben** is so miserable as **the Thing**. I got a fan letter recently from a reader who wanted to know why **Ben** was unhappy being **The Thing**, who concluded "You think that he'd like it by now!" Well, he *doesn't* like it. He's a lot like **the Elephant Man** in this respect, and that's why he had the particular reaction that he did when he saw *The Elephant Man*, in issue #232.

*Talk about the other members of **the FF — Reed, Sue, and Johnny.***

Johnny hasn't grown up at all. He's still the hot-headed immature adolescent he's always been. Wait'll you see how he reacts to having **the She-Hulk** in the group.

Reed Richards would probably be a small town college professor if it hadn't been for the accident that made him into **Mister Fantastic**. Contrary to popular belief, **Reed** is not perfect. There are some quirks in his personality than I want to reveal as I delve into his past in the coming months. What was he like in college? What was his childhood like? We really don't know!

Think **Reed Richards**, the most steadfast and cautious man you can imagine, the guy who double checks every instrument fifty times before he embarks on anything — this guy once got in an untested rocket ship, *knowing full well that it had insufficient shielding*, with his fiancee and a sixteen year old kid? There's more to **Reed** than we know about. That's all I'll say for now.

Sue Richards has been unintentionally pushed to the sidelines a lot in her career. I want it to be clear that **Sue** has a memory and an imagination. She may not be the strategic genius **Reed** is, but she's contributed her share of moves to the group's fighting style, and she's remembered them, and learned a great deal quickly and well. She's a bright lady.

Basically, **Sue** is a mother, not an adventuress. Being a mother is a full-time job. She's a beautiful woman, and if I had to describe it, I'd say she has more of a radiant beauty than the glamorous beauty that **Dazzler** has, or the kind of whimsical charm the **Wasp** has. I think of **Sue** as the mother of the Marvel Universe, and, of course, everyone's mother is the most beautiful woman in the world.

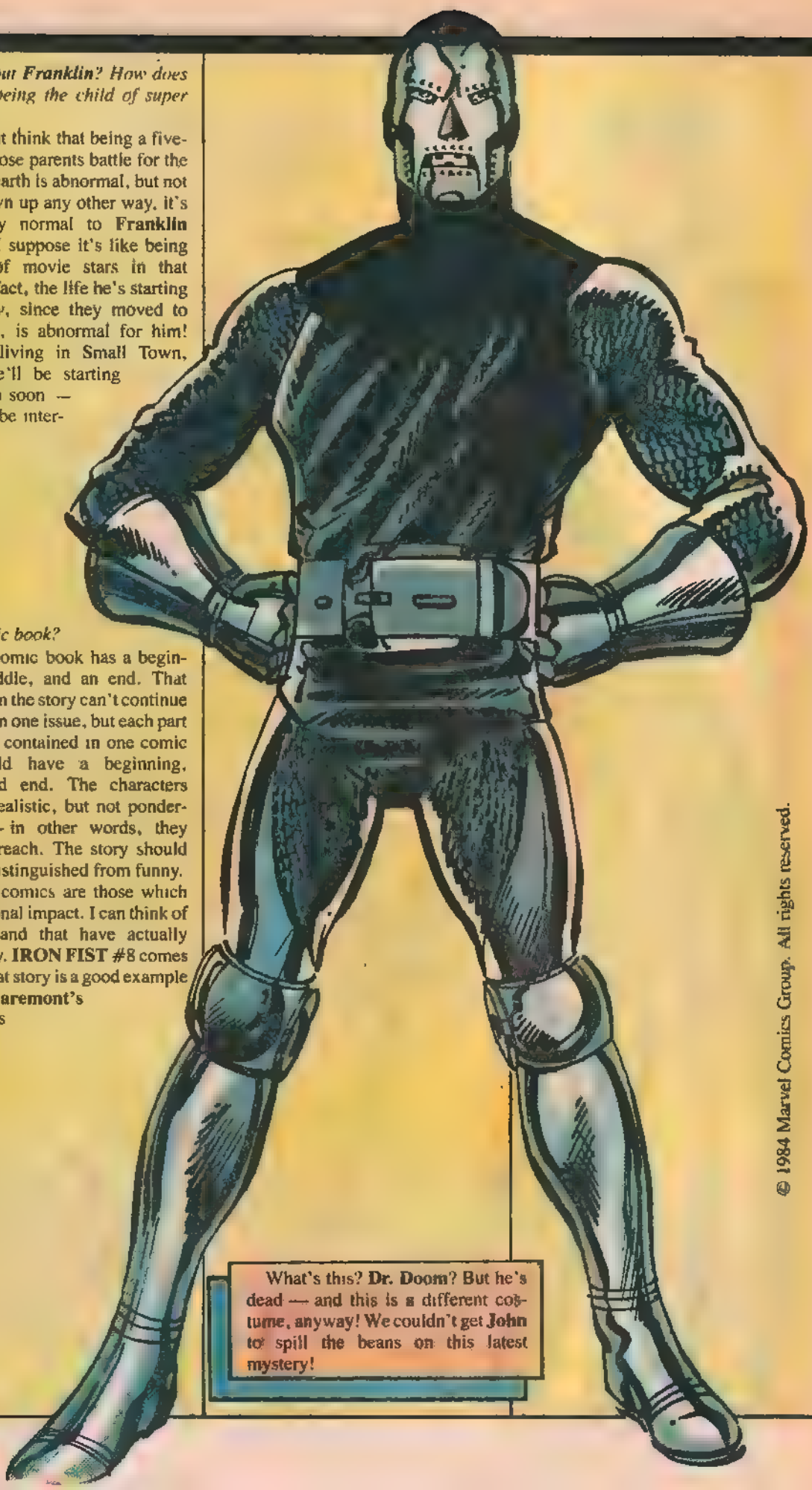
*What about **Franklin**? How does he handle being the child of super heroes?*

You might think that being a five-year-old whose parents battle for the survival of earth is abnormal, but not having grown up any other way, it's all perfectly normal to **Franklin Richards**. I suppose it's like being the child of movie stars in that respect. In fact, the life he's starting to lead *now*, since they moved to Connecticut, is abnormal for him! Now he's living in Small Town, U.S.A.! He'll be starting kindergarten soon — that should be interesting.

What makes a good comic book?

A good comic book has a beginning, a middle, and an end. That doesn't mean the story can't continue for more than one issue, but each part of the story contained in one comic book should have a beginning, middle, and end. The characters should be realistic, but not ponderously so — in other words, they shouldn't preach. The story should be fun, as distinguished from funny.

The best comics are those which have emotional impact. I can think of a few offhand that have actually made me cry. **IRON FIST** #8 comes to mind. That story is a good example of **Chris Claremont's** writing at its



What's this? **Dr. Doom**? But he's dead — and this is a different costume, anyway! We couldn't get **John** to spill the beans on this latest mystery!

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best. It brought a tear to my eye even though I saw the story in advance and drew it! The stories starring **Darrell The Clown**, back in **MAN-THING**, written by **Steve Gerber** and drawn by **Mike Ploog** touched me. **Len Wein** wrote a beautiful **HULK** story a few years back, in which **The Hulk** befriended a little blind girl. "The Kid Who Collected Spider-Man" also had an impact on me. A really good comic can make me laugh, too, but it's harder to think of examples of that offhand.

*Are you competing with what **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby** did when they wrote and drew **THE FANTASTIC FOUR**?*

Oh, no. I couldn't compete with **Stan** and **Jack**. I'm not the writer **Stan** is nor the artist **Jack** is. Being one person both writing and drawing the strip means that I have a potential for a better synthesis of art and story, perhaps. But I don't think I could ever create **Galactus**, **the Black Panther**, or **the Inhumans**. And those guys created **Galactus**, **the Black Panther**, and **the Inhumans** all within six issues of each other!

I hope to be a worthy heir to **Stan** and **Jack**. **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** is the second highest selling Marvel title today. But by all accounts, it should be number one, and I intend to make it that way! It is, after all, "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!" ●

Who is **Terminus**? From looking at his picture, you might think he's the vilest creature to stumble upon the planet Earth in a long time! And you know something? You'd be right!

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HI THERE, EVERYONE! I'M YOUR HOST, FRED HEMBECK, AND I'D LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO A BRAND NEW REGULAR FEATURE IN THIS MAGAZINE...
HEMBECK'S PAGE IN MARVEL AGE!
IT'S ALL THE RAGE!
WITH ME TODAY IS MARVEL'S FIRST AND FOREMOST SUPER TEAM--THE FANTASTIC FOUR! HOWDY FOLKS!
HELLO, FRED.
HIYA!
H'LO...
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
GEE, I'M OVER-WHELMED--THERE'S JUST SO MUCH TO ASK! WHERE DO I START?...
WELL, I KNOW IT'S NOT ME YOU'RE INTERESTED IN, SO JUST WHAT IS YOUR QUESTION?
YEAH, WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION?
YES, WHAT IS IT?
WHAT'S JOHN BYRNE REALLY LIKE?..
THEN YOU MUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S COMING UP FOR ALPHA FLIGHT?..
UH UH.
WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
JUST WHY DID YOU LEAVE THE X-MEN, JOHN?
JOHN

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AHA! I'VE GOT IT!
YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MY TREMENDOUS I.Q., DON'T YOU? WELL,--
NO.NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
OH,THEN I SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO KNOW JUST HOW HOT I CAN GET. Y'SEE, IT DEPENDS--
UH UH. THAT'S NOT IT EITHER.
SO IT'S MY BRUTE STRENGTH THAT IMPRESSES YOU,eh? YOU WANNA KNOW WHO'S STRONGER, ME OR THE HULK, RIGHT?
WRONG.
OWW!!..
OF ALL THE NERVE!
...IT'S FRED HEMBECK?!? FRED ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
JOHN BYRNE --JUST THE MAN I WANTED TO SEE. YEAH, I'M OKAY, BUT I DO HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU...
OH? I SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT MY PLANS ARE FOR THE F.F? WELL, TO BEGIN WITH--
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
I SWORE I'D KILL THE NEXT PERSON WHO ASKED ME THAT!
KILL!.. KILL!.. KILL!..
TH-THAT'S--AGGK-ALL FOR NOW GANG...GGHHK.. B-BE SEEING YOU...URK.. NEXT...MONTH! B-BYE...

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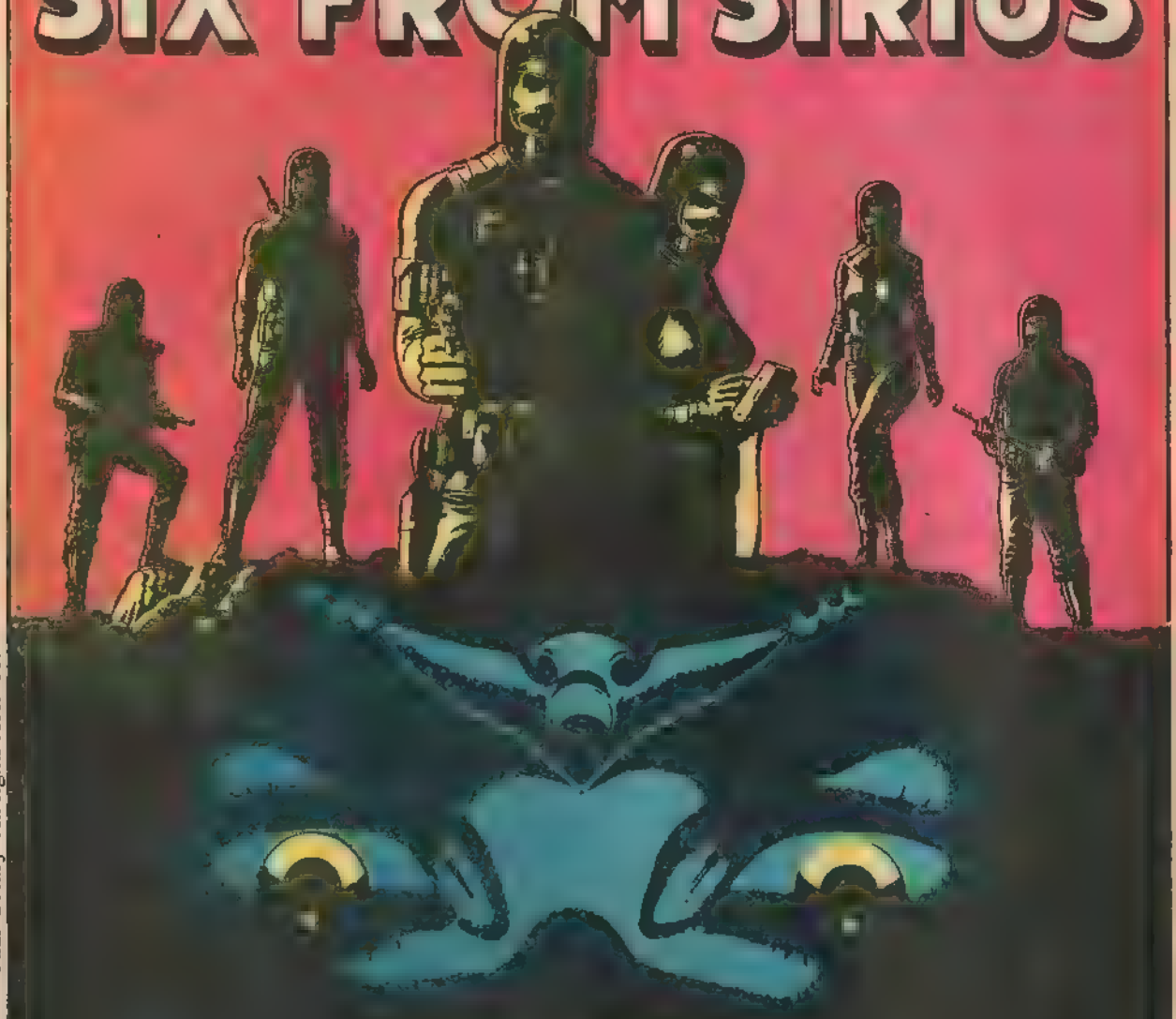
SIX FROM SIRIUS



by D. Jon Zimmerman
with Mark Lerer

More than mortal, but less than god, they have made legend throughout the cosmos. They come from another star system to preserve intergalactic peace. Should their mission fail, two worlds will wage war until only death reigns victorious. They are . . . **the Six from Sirius!**

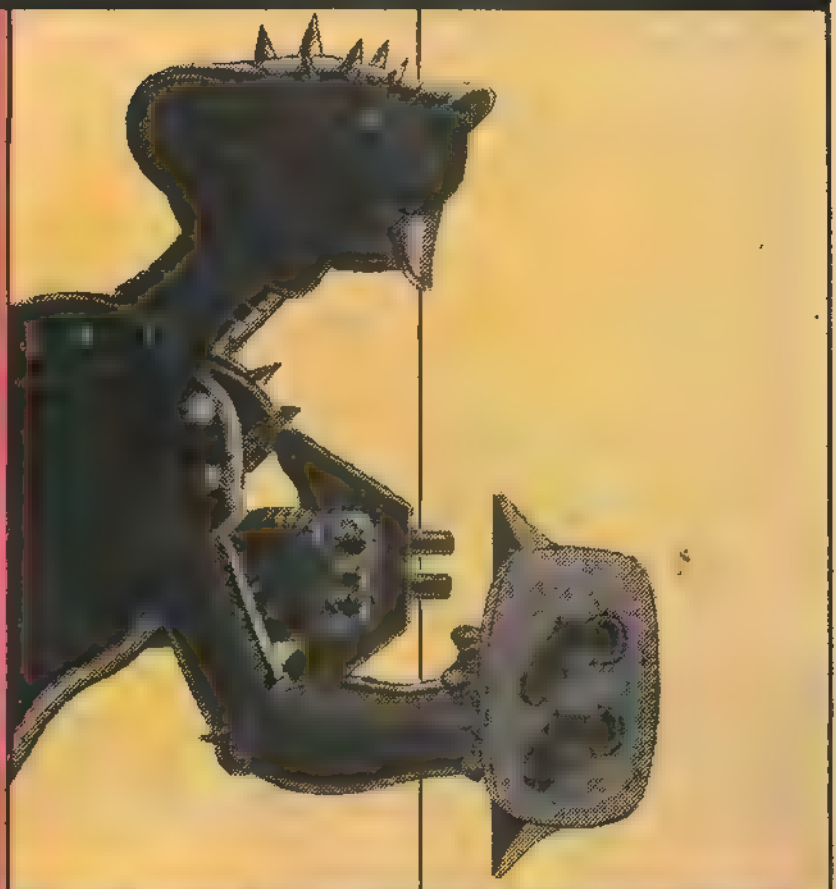
Three years in the making and over one hundred and twenty pages long, the science fiction tale **SIX FROM SIRIUS** has a political theme which parallels the Cuban missile crisis of the early 1960's. This Limited Series describes a conflict between two superpowers, worlds rather than nations, one of which is supplying weapons to a moon of the other world. As when the Soviet Union attempted to build missile bases in Cuba over twenty years ago, the population of the threatened planet stand for its very life. To avert Armageddon, the two powerful worlds begin negotiations. A freelance team of trouble shooters, **the Six from Sirius**, must make sure that the Ambassador, **Phaedra**, gets to

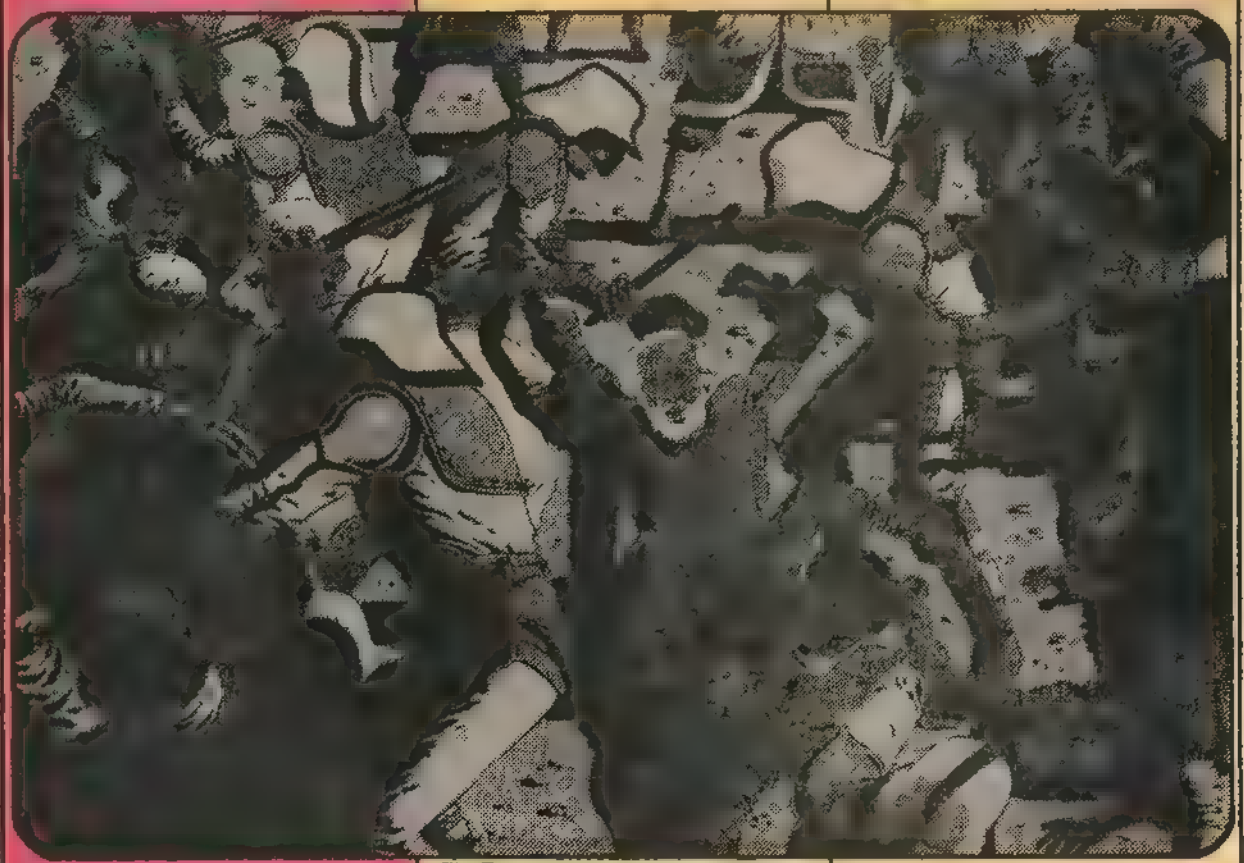
'Six From Sirius story © 1984 Doug Moench, artwork © 1984 Paul Gulacy All rights reserved.

this moon in time for the negotiations, so that chances for peace are not sabotaged

The telepathic **Phaedra**, however, has been abducted, and held against her will in a space station prison. She believes that this is happening for her own safety, refusing to believe that someone would keep her prisoner to sabotage the peace negotiations and cause interplanetary war.

The Six soon discover that their mission is far more dangerous than first expected. A bizarre assortment of foes, sent by factions of the imminently warring worlds, wish to prevent their mission of peace from succeeding. Among these are the **Fax-Men**, short for Facsimile Men. One of them, a malevolent robot named **Masterfax**, cares nothing for his resemblance to a human being; he relishes his existence as an evil robot. More alarming, **the Six** also discover an insidious threat from within their own ranks. Their mission takes these six adventurers to many exotic, interplanetary locales in a race with time





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to keep the very galaxy from total destruction.

"I really enjoyed working with **Paul Gulacy** again," writer **Doug Moench** told **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. **Doug** and artist **Paul** collaborated famously on **MASTER OF KUNG FU** several years back, and haven't worked together on a multi-part series since. Further, **SIX FROM SIRIUS** is their first collaboration for full-color, high-quality format Epic comics.

Doug and **Paul** had originally planned to do **SIX FROM SIRIUS** as a forty page story to run as a serial in **EPIC ILLUSTRATED**. "When we proposed the project to **Archie Goodwin**," **Doug** recalled, "we stipulated that we wanted to work on a non-deadline basis. An open deadline would allow us the time to express ourselves and develop the story more fully." Once **Doug** and **Paul** began to work on the project, they found that the freedom they requested let the story grow longer and longer. "Because **Paul** and I talked regularly, ideas would keep popping into our heads to change the direction of the story in little ways. You could say we had a lot of plot conferences, though I felt they were just talks. I'd call up **Paul** and give him my latest thoughts on the project and he might say 'Great!' Or, he might say 'Nah, that stinks, why don't we try it this way instead.' and then he'd throw me *hot* ideas! We had fun, and I've even had some fights putting the story together. The story changed an awful lot from how it started to what it finally appeared."

Not long after pages came in that the Epic offices plans changed for how to present the final version of **SIX FROM SIRIUS**. The Epic staff decided this story should appear not as a serial, but in a special high-quality Limited Series in the Epic line of comics. **Doug** observed, "Four monthly installments would mean that readers would not have to wait so long to reach the end of the story which might have taken a full year or two to serialize in **EPIC ILLUSTRATED**."

Already famous for a fine and crisp style, **Paul Gulacy** pushed his talents to the limit to give **SIX FROM SIRIUS** a richly born of rich and lush detail. Even **Doug**, who is very fond of what with **Paul's** work was amazed by the extraordinary precision of the finished art. **Paul** colored, as well as penciled and inked, the book. Remembered **Doug**, "I had never seen **Paul's** color art style before. I'd seen his paintings, but nothing could really compare with the work he's done for **SIX FROM SIRIUS**. **Paul** outdid himself making **SIX FROM SIRIUS** one of the best looking comics of the coming year."

The first issue of **SIX FROM SIRIUS** goes on sale in 1984. But don't wait until the last minute to reserve your copy. The line for advance orders at your local comic book shop could already be forming now!

Six From Sirius story © 1984 Doug Moench, artwork © 1984 Paul Gulacy. All rights reserved.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SPIDER-MAN

by Bob Sodaro and Mark Lerer

The story by now is history. Several years ago, while attending a demonstration of radioactivity, student **Peter Parker** was accidentally bitten by a dying spider that had been exposed to deadly radiation. To his surprise, **Peter** did not get ill, but rather developed powers which mimicked those of the spider. He now possessed enhanced strength, speed, agility, and the strange abilities to cling to walls and sense danger. Deciding at first to use his new powers to cash in, **Peter** designed a **Spider-Man** costume and, using his scientific brilliance, constructed artificial web-spinning devices. After appearing on TV, the amazing **Spider-Man** became an overnight sensation. Soon, though, the tragic death of his **Uncle Ben**, which **Peter** could have prevented, taught **Spider-Man** the lesson that with great power must come great responsibility. A phenomenal crime fighting career began.

In the years since, **Spider-Man** has fought every kind of threat, from simple thugs to criminal masterminds, from super-powered hoods to cosmic world-beaters. He has battled alongside nearly every superpowered champion, and adventured everywhere from his home in New York City to the mystic realms of **Dr. Strange**.

Now **Spider-Man** undergoes a series of dramatic changes, as the direction of the world's most popular super hero takes an innovative and bold turn under the editorship of **Danny Fingeroth**. The old creative team leaves, making way for **Tom DeFalco**, writer, and **Ron Frenz**,

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penciler, for **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** will now be written and penciled by the versatile **Al Milgrom**. **MARVEL TEAM-UP**, which regularly stars **Spidey** in tandem with different Marvel heroes, has not yet been assigned a permanent writer; for a few months scripts from **Tony Isabella**, **David Michelinie**, and **Cary Burkett** will amaze you, penciled by **Spider-Man's** newest artist, **Greg LaRocque**.

Why the changes? After all, **Spider-Man** is the world's most popular super hero as he is! **Danny Fingeroth** let us in on his personal view. "Simply put, life changes people, and **Spider-Man** was due for a change!" First, **Spider-Man** has a new costume. Next, **Peter's** personal life will take turns that readers never thought possible. Third, participation in the cosmic confrontation shown in **MARVEL SUPER HEROES: THE SECRET WARS** has changed **Peter**, his outlook, and the ways he reacts to ordinary provocations at home. These adjustments will cause many unexpected situations!

Where will **Spider-Man's** new scribes take the web-slinger? That's a closely guarded secret. A new villain named **the Rose** lurks. He's not what you'd expect an underworld crime master to be like! Also upcoming are menacing appearances by **Jack O'Lantern**, **the Red Ghost**, and of course, **the Hobgoblin**. Watch out, though — there'll be a strange twist in **the Hobgoblin** storyline — so if you thought you had the true identity of this mysterious bad guy figured out, you might have to scratch your pet theory and guess again!

Al Milgrom's stories for **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** will have a style not unlike his free-wheeling **U.S. 1 Limited Series**. **Danny** set us straight: "Oh, there'll be a lot less punning, and the humor will be a bit more sophisticated than **U.S. 1**. But **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN** will be a more light-hearted book than the other **Spider-Man** titles."

The baleful **Blob** — coming soon to the pages of **Spider-Man**!

All this and the **Black Cat**, to boot!

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MARVEL TEAM-UP, the third **Spider-Man** title, will see the wall-crawler team up with the new **Iron Man**, **Moon Knight**, **Daredevil** and **the Black Widow**, and **Nomad**. **Danny's** policy asserts that there will be convincing reasons for **Spidey** to meet with these and the many other super heroes he'll encounter. Future team-ups will have reasonable causes — and will not occur by coincidence or random happenstance.

You've all seen **Spider-Man's** sleek new costume here in the pages of **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. **Spidey** receives this new set of duds in **THE SECRET WARS**. What you may not know is that this outfit does more than *look* different — it obeys **Spider-Man's** mental commands! No more having to stop and change clothes for **Peter**! There are more surprises, too — not everything about this new costume is *good*!

Felicia Hardy, **the Black Cat**, will play a major role in **Spider-Man's** future, being the current love of his life. We asked **Danny** if the **Black Cat** would marry **Spider-Man**. A sly grin appeared on **Danny's** face. All he would say was, "With love, there is always the chance for marriage But there is also the chance for tragedy!" We have no idea what he meant by this cryptic remark, but we do know that **the Black Cat** will figure prominently in all three **Spider-Man** titles.

Danny pays close attention to the tight continuity between the three **SPIDER-MAN** books. "I want to intertwine the three books," he explained, "to make one continuous saga. But while the three titles will interrelate, you'll be able to read each as a single story."

It seems that as much about **Spider-Man's** future is unknown as is known! All we know for sure is that the last twenty years have been eventful ones for the **Amazing Spider-Man**, and the style and approach of **Danny** and the new creative crew will insure that the next twenty are off to a flying start! ●

POWER PACK

The Origin

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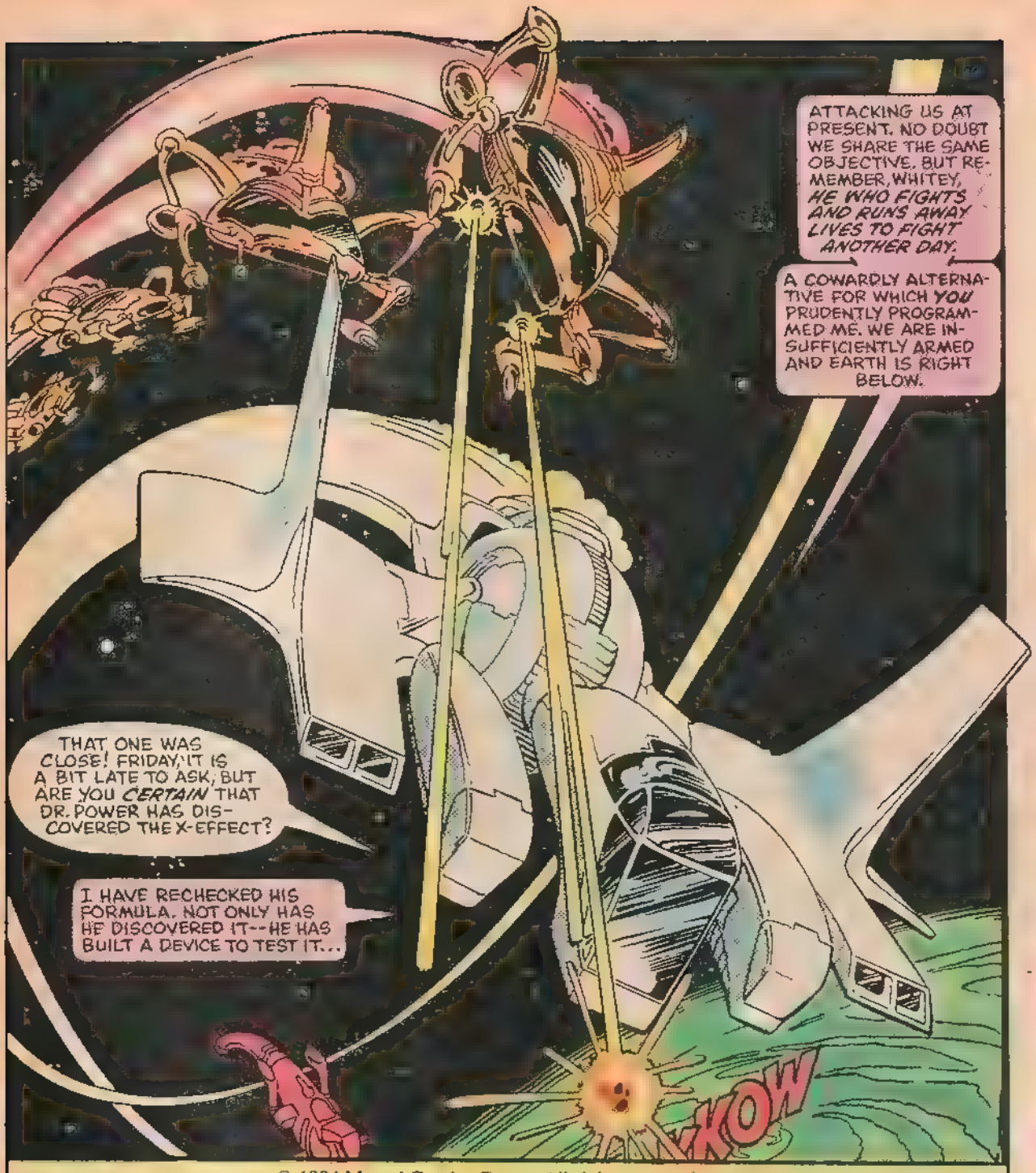
by D. Jon Zimmerman

"I give you my powers so that you can use them to save your world!" And, with those final words from a dying alien, **Alex**, **Julie**, **Jack** and **Kathie Power** are transformed from ordinary children into the incredible **POWER PACK** — the youngest super heroes on earth!

The concept for a super hero team composed of children has been in the mind of **Louise Jones**, one of Marvel's most respected editors, since she was a child herself.

"I always liked stories about other children, people my own age, when I was growing up," said **Louise**. "So I guess doing a comic book about a group of super hero children was just natural for me." The opportunity for her to present this concept occurred last year. "It was during an editorial meeting," recalled **Louise**, "that Editor in Chief **Jim Shooter** said that we editors should be on the lookout for new projects because there was a great need for fresh, new material. I told him of my idea about **Power Pack** and he thought about it for a moment, then told me to do up a presentation because he thought it was a pretty good idea."

During the time that **Louise** was planning the diverse details that doing a presentation entails — developing the characters' personali-


ATTACKING US AT PRESENT. NO DOUBT WE SHARE THE SAME OBJECTIVE. BUT REMEMBER, WHITEY, HE WHO FIGHTS AND RUNS AWAY LIVES TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.
A COWARDLY ALTERNATIVE FOR WHICH YOU PRUDENTLY PROGRAMMED ME. WE ARE INSUFFICIENTLY ARMED AND EARTH IS RIGHT BELOW.
THAT ONE WAS CLOSE! FRIDAY, IT IS A BIT LATE TO ASK, BUT ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT DR. POWER HAS DISCOVERED THE X-EFFECT?
I HAVE RECHECKED HIS FORMULA. NOT ONLY HAS HE DISCOVERED IT--HE HAS BUILT A DEVICE TO TEST IT...
KOW

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ties, describing their powers, conceiving their costumes and sketching out storylines, an unknown artist from Atlanta, Georgia walked into her office with a portfolio.

"I remember the day **June Brigman** came in and showed me her samples," smiled **Louise**. "I told her that her stuff was really beautiful, but I didn't have anything available for her at the moment. Then, almost as an aside, I asked, 'Can you draw kids?' And **June** said, 'Oh, yeah, I used to sketch kids in shopping malls.' So I showed her what I had of **Power Pack**. And **June** agreed to make some sample sketches for me."

For **June Brigman**, it was an opportunity not to be missed. "After I talked with **Louise**," recalled **June**, "I went right back to the apartment of the friend where I was staying in New York and did some sketches of the **Power Pack**. When I finished, I went back to Marvel and showed them to **Louise** and she really liked what I had drawn."

"They were absolutely dead on!" said **Louise**. "**June's** drawings were the kids as I had envisioned them. I knew what their souls were like, but **June** gave the **Power Pack** their faces. **June** gave all the kids a new depth — a whole new dimension."

In virtually no time, **Louise** was in **Jim Shooter's** office with everything — and more, she hoped — that **Jim** wanted for a hit comic book.

"Up to this point," said **Louise**, "I thought maybe, if we were really lucky, we'd be able to have a limited

series. And, then **Jim** said, 'This is great! Let's do it as a regular comic!' So that's what we're doing!"

June, meanwhile, had returned to Atlanta where she received the good news. "I was really surprised," confessed **June**. "I thought **Power Pack** was a great idea and the time was right for such a series, but I didn't think everything would happen as fast as it did.

"Y'know," she added, "I'd worked a long time drawing samples of big, muscular, macho, hunk super heroes, and I get asked this question, 'Can you draw little kids?' It was just a big surprise, but it's working out really well!"

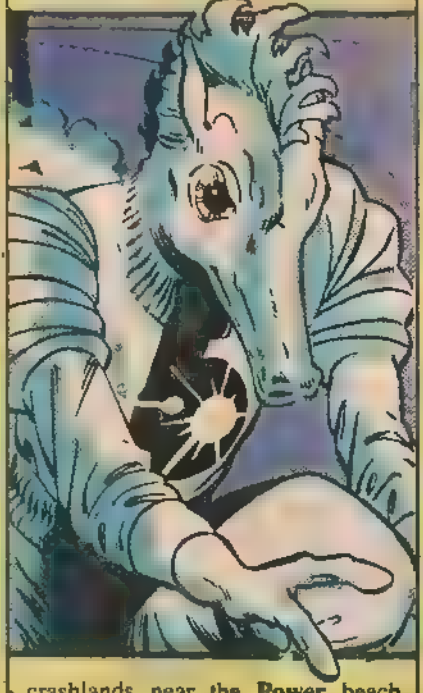
Shortly thereafter, **June** moved up to the New York area to be closer to Marvel's offices. "There's only so much that you can communicate over the phone. You can really collaborate a lot better in person."

And what that collaboration is producing is exceeding even the creators' expectations. The story begins with **Dr. Power**, the kids' father, discovering a way to make relatively cheap and, supposedly, safe energy by converting matter into anti-matter. And it is this knowledge of an as-yet unperfected process that embroils his family, and earth, in an inter-galactic war and forever changes the lives of his children.

As the story progresses, we meet the alien who gives the kids their powers and, unfortunately, dies shortly thereafter. **Louise** dubbed the alien "**Whitey**."

"It's probably not what his name will be when the story is printed," said **Louise**. "But while I can't tell you his real name yet, I can tell you what he is. He's a xenologist studying human behavior. He's a Kynallian. He's actually the first Kynallian to study earth; he's fairly young, and this is also his first job. But, because earthpeople are not space-farers, he cannot have direct contact with anyone on the planet. So he's really in a quandry when he find out about **Dr. Power's** process, because it is the exact same procedure that his race discovered centuries ago. And that process, when used, totally annihilated the Kynallian homeworld."

Whitey tries to get in touch with his superiors, who live in a planet-sized space station. He sends them a message telling what **Dr. Power** is doing and requests urgent permission to intervene and stop him. But, the message is intercepted by the Kynallians' mortal enemies, the evil Snarks. The Snarks send their spaceships to earth, with orders to capture **Dr. Power** at any cost. Desperately **Whitey** and his ultra-sophisticated spaceship, **Friday**, fight back. It is a valiant defense of earth, but doomed by the overwhelming odds. **Whitey's** spaceship



crashlands near the **Power** beach house at the same time the Snarks begin their assault on the unsuspecting residents in the dwelling.

The kids, near the beach when **Friday** lands, find **Whitey** who, as he dies, passes on his super-human abilities, bequeathing one power to each child. Thus, **Alex** becomes **Gee**, master of gravity, **Julie** becomes **Lightspeed**, able to fly at (and possibly beyond) the speed of light, **Jack** becomes **Mass Master**, able to make himself either super-dense or totally ethereal, and **Katie** becomes **Energizer**, capable of drawing energy from any object and transforming it into devastating power bolts.

It is after they receive their powers that the Snarks find the children. The evil aliens contemptuously believe the kids are totally helpless. The **Power** children desperately fight back, pitting the full force of their new abilities against the enemy.

It is only in the aftermath that the children begin to comprehend what has happened. They have won a battle, but earth is still in danger. And their parents are prisoners, traveling on a spaceship bound to a planet hidden in some far, unknown section of the galaxy.

That proves to be only the beginning of their problems. For, in addition to the threats **the Power Pack** has to face from without, they also must confront the psychological trauma hitting them from within.

A series as rich in conflict and action could come only from a team that works in perfect harmony. **June** emphasized that point, saying, "**Louise** and I have similar thoughts for the kids. Her descriptions she's real verbal and gets her ideas across real well. I don't have any problems drawing from her script."

"It's an awful fun project!" responded **Louise**. "In fact, in addition to this being the first series for **June**, it's also the first series for me! All the while I was an editor at Marvel — I'm freelance now — **Jim Shooter** kept saying that I should write something. But I was putting so much energy into the editing, that I had no real time. But now, I can't wait for the first issue of **POWER PACK** to go on sale and see what the readers' reaction is. And I can't wait until they see the art . . . it's beautiful!"

"I try to be real careful with the way the kids look," said **June**. "Their expressions, their faces — I want everything to be believable." That is not all that **June** does, for she has also returned to her past to achieve the look she wants for the kids. "I put a lot of my personality into **Jack**," she said. "And **Julie** has a haircut just like the one I had when I was a child."

"It's so surprising sometimes at how grown-up kids can really be," said **June**. "I really think this will be an exciting comic for readers of all ages."

POWER PACK is already gaining a groundswell of interest that will only begin to be sated when it reaches the stands on May first. And, if response is as enthusiastic as it has been in the Bullpen, **POWER PACK** is sure to be the hit of 1984!

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MARVEL AGE: 1962

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
12¢
The Fantastic Four
5 JULY
...MEET... DOCTOR DOOM!
WITH A TURN OF THIS DIAL I SHALL DESTROY THE FOUR OF YOU FOREVER!!
I'VE GOT TO REACH HIM! HE'S DRAINING THE AIR OUT OF THE ROOM! I CAN'T BREATHE! MY--MY STRENGTH IS FADING!
AIR!! I GOTTA HAVE AIR!
MY FLAME IS DYING WITHOUT OXYGEN! I'M HELPLESS!
I MUST GET IN TO SAVE THEM! BUT HOW?
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
12¢
The Fantastic Four
4 MAY
STOP HIM! IF THE SUB-MARINER REACHES THE WATER, HE'LL BECOME INVINCIBLE!
THE COMING OF THE SUB-MARINER!

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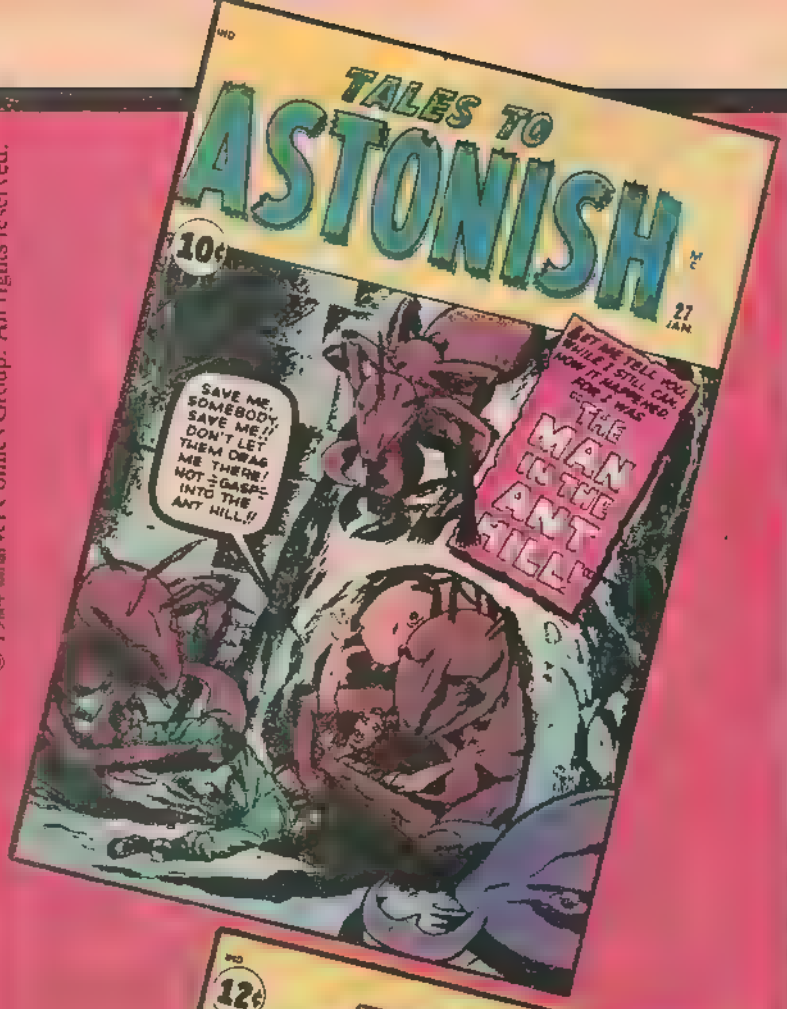
by **Warren Reece**

We had just touched on the debut of **the Fantastic Four** when we had to leave off last issue. Let's continue from that November, 1961 station in the Marvel Time Line and look at the events of 1962. Please don't feel alienated if you're too young to have caught a lot of this Marvel history as it happned, by the way — a lot of folks have gotten their exposure to early Marvel masterpieces by reading back issues and surveys such as this!

The **F.F.** emerged in the wake of the monster and fantasy trend that had spread through comics by the early nineteen sixties. Super heroes were swept along with the current. Monsters appeared in many of the early **Fantastic Four** stories that came out in 1962. The **F.F.**'s first foe, the **Mole Man**, employed a horde of giant monsters against our charismatic quartet. The **Skrulls**, who first appeared in **F.F. #2**, were goblin-like aliens of the **Lee-Kirby** variety who could change into any shape. The **Fantastic Four** scared the **Skrulls** off Earth, ironically, by showing them clippings from **STRANGE TALES** and **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY**, which the **Skrulls** took for pictures of actual Earth warriors! The **Miracle Man**'s challenge to the foursome in issue #3 featured a sequence with a giant monster, and many early **F.F.** villains to come, such as **Gargantus**, came right out of the monster set. The **F.F.** themselves, at least in three out of four cases, were really one step removed from the monsters in the fantasy books they used to scare off the **Skrulls**!

The non-monster guest stars who appeared in **THE FANTASTIC FOUR** in 1962 are equally memorable, and many have become vital mainstays in the Marvel Universe. The **Sub-Mariner** made his first modern appearance in issue #4. **Doctor Doom** came along in issue #5. **Doom** enlisted the **Sub-Mariner** against the human race in issue #6, forming an alliance which has recurred many times, and became the basis for the series **SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP** years later in 1975. **The Puppet Master** and his stepdaughter **Alicia Masters** came along in issue #8. **Alicia** quickly became "beauty" to **Ben Grimm**'s "beast," and this blind sculptress has over the years remained the tranquilizing factor in the otherwise turbulent life of our lovable monster.

The super hero trend was here to stay. The flood of fan mail that **Stan Lee**'s office began to receive in 1962 surpassed any such reader response in the industry's history. The first Marvel letter column, the "Fan-


TALES TO ASTONISH
10¢
27
JAN.
SAVE ME, SOMEBODY, SAVE ME!! DON'T LET THEM DRAG ME THERE! NOT ↓ GASP! INTO THE ANT HILL!!
LET ME TELL YOU WHILE I STILL CAN, HOW IT HAPPENED FOR I WAS THE MAN IN THE ANT HILL!

12¢
TALES TO ASTONISH
YOU'LL GASP IN AMAZEMENT AT "THE RETURN OF ANT MAN!"
35
SEPT
STOP HIM, MY PETS! OBEY YOUR LEADER! THE ANT MAN COMMANDS YOU!!

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tastic Four Fan Page" started in **F.F.** #3. Issue #5's fan page carried a message of high hopes for the **F.F.** from a Missouri fan named **Roy Thomas**, who would later become **Stan's** second-in-command at Marvel, and one of comics' best-read writers. Issue #11 featured a story called "A Visit with the Fantastic Four," wherein our heroes opened their headquarters up to us fans, and inaugurated the interplay between heroes and readers that became typical for Marvel. The Marvel Age of Comics was underway.

Later in 1962, the remaining fantasy and monster titles began featuring super hero stories. **TALES TO ASTONISH** #27, cover-dated January, introduced **Henry Pym** as "The Man in the Ant Hill." It was apparently based on the story "Trapped in the Ant Hill" from **MYSTIC** #57, March 1957, in which young blonde brilliant scientist **Perry Moore** had a remarkably similar experience to **Henry Pym's**. Popular response to **Pym's** adventure prompted "The Return of the Ant Man" in **ASTONISH** #35, the September issue. **Ant Man** thereupon began as a regular series in **TALES TO ASTONISH**. His most notable early villain was **Egghead**, introduced in issue #38. As did many Marvel heroes, **Ant Man** also fought Communists in his early adventures. **Ant Man** went on in time, of course, to discover and marry **the Wasp**, and to change his identity to **Giant-Man** to **Goliath**, and ultimately to **Yellowjacket**, in possibly the most checkered of all super hero careers. He retired only a few years ago.

Then came . . . **the Incredible Hulk! HULK** #1 appeared with a May 1962 cover date. This new character combined several monster concepts and introduced several new themes. He partially resembled the Universal Pictures version of the **Frankenstein** monster, although the **Hulk** was a bit handsomer and proved to be much more powerful. Some of **Bruce Banner's** earliest transformations into the monster were triggered by moonlight, not unlike a werewolf. The magazine's six-issue run was more than amply filled with anti-communist battles. The stories featured the monstrous **Hulk** as a misunderstood protagonist, or anti-hero, continuing the hero-villain

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tradition of the **Sub-Mariner**. Atomic age science figured in the **Hulk's** gamma-ray origin, and the nature of **Dr. Banner's** transformations was linked with exposure to radioactivity for some time. Teen interest came in the body of the **Hulk's** companion **Rick Jones**, who would go on to become confidant of several important Marvel stars. **Betty Ross** provided the romantic interest, and her father, **General "Thunderbolt" Ross**, represented the unreasoning military, and became the **Hulk's** nemesis.

What an August of 1962! That month gave us *two* of the greatest stars in the new Marvel Age of Comics, the mighty **Thor** and the amazing **Spider-Man**!

Thor debuted in **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY** #83, in a thirteen page tale, a length customary for the lead story in a fantasy magazine. Again keeping to the monster trend, **Thor's** origin featured an encounter with the **Stone Men of Saturn**, who had themselves appeared in several fantasy stories in the preceding years. Issues #84 and 85 introduced **Thor's** then-current human identity of **Donald Blake**, and Marvel's interpretations of Norse legends: **Asgard**, **Odin**, **Balder**, **Loki**, and **Tyr**. As **Thor's** popularity quickly grew, **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY** evolved from a fantasy book to a half-adventure and half-fantasy title, and finally to an all-heroic adventure series, changing its title to **THOR**.

Meanwhile, **AMAZING ADULT FANTASY** stood on the verge of cancellation. With little left to lose, **Stan Lee** talked publisher **Martin Goodman** into running an eleven page story starring a character called **Spider-Man**, inspired in part by the pulp character **The Spider** from 1933. **Jack Kirby** was originally to draw the feature, but the assignment was ultimately given to **Steve Ditko** for a more "man in the street" look. **AMAZING ADULT FANTASY** became **AMAZING FANTASY** for issue #15 starring **Spider-Man**, and, well, the rest is history! Unprecedented sales and a flood of fan mail soon gave the troubled teenager his own series.

Note to trivia buffs! For a nice surprise, pick up a copy of *Origins of Marvel Comics* which reprints many of the early tales this series of articles discusses. The reprints of the *covers* for the **F.F.**, **THOR**, and **SPIDER-MAN** tales in the book were shot from pre-publication stats of the original art, giving you slightly different versions of these legendary covers from what actually appeared on the newsstands. If you're lucky enough to own these valuable back issues, you can compare the original versions to what finally got printed!

The year 1962 ended with more success for Marvel Comics. **The Human Torch** got his own solo series in **STRANGE TALES**, starting with issue #101. This first story introduced **the Wizard**, the evil scientist who would plague **the Fantastic Four** for many years to come. Other characters to come along in 1962 include the **Toad Men**, the **Ringmaster** and his **Circus of Crime**, and **Zemnu the Titan**. Finally, two of the first Marvel Annuals came out, **STRANGE TALES** and **MILLIE THE MODEL**!

Truly, 1962 was a foundation year for the Marvel Age! Next issue, we'll look at 1963!

WHO CARES?

Send your letters to MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE % Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016

Welcome back! *Jeff Plackemeier* of Columbia, MO, wrote us and told us that he'd finally come up with a letter column title that settles the issue of what to call this letter column permanently! You're a million laughs, *Jeff*! And, now, on to the matter at hand . . .

Dear **Jim**,

Since the Marvel Graphic Novel line has no letter column, I thought I'd send my comments to **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**. First, about the new, white, covers. I don't know, people. I mean, sure, they don't get all smudged with fingerprints, but they don't have the *sleekness* of the black-covered, black-bordered previous masterpieces. So if you do keep the white covers, puh-leeeease bring back the black bordered pages! Remember — these aren't ordinary comics — these are Graphic Novels.

No more fantasy stuff! **Elric** and **Killraven** were *total* bores! Stick to Marvel mainstream characters!

As for **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, great! More, more, more!

Howard Fishman
768 Mountain Road
West Hartford, CT 06117

The Marvel Graphic Novel line is one of constant variety and experimentation, Howard! So it's good to hear your feedback. Bear in mind, though, that in the months to come, Graphic Novels of all *kinds* are going to come your way, featuring page designs and graphics which you've never seen before in *any* form of comic literature! And the same goes for storylines — everything from Marvel superstars like *DAZZLER* to *Ron Wilson's SUPERBOXERS* to who *knows* what! So keep reading!

Dear **Jim**,

I just want you to know how thoroughly I'm enjoying the fine work you're doing. I especially enjoyed the short re-cap of Marvel's various fan clubs in last month's **MARVEL AGE** — having belonged to all of them!

However, in the interest of completeness, might you note the *other* editors of the **MARVELMANIA MONTHLY MAGAZINE** — those who took over after **Mark Evanier** left? There were four of them. **Bruce Schweiger, Gary Lowenthal**, my old writing partner **Ed Nooncheste**r, and . . . who was that fourth guy, anyway? Oh well, it'll come to me.

In the meantime, any chance of making Assistant Editors' Month an annual tradition? I loved those books, especially **MARVEL TEAM-UP**.

Oh, yeah! I remember the other editor! The kid's name was . . .

Jonathan Yost
219 S. Barrington Ave. #322
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Great to hear from you, *Jonathan*, after all these years!

You aren't the only one who dug Assistant Editor's month! Here are some more samplings of the many comments we've received on that rather bizarre event:

Dear Marvel,

I really liked all the stuff that went on during assistant editors' month! My favorite was seeing **the Avengers** on Late Night with **David Letterman**! Who thought of this idea? And what was that symbol in the top left hand corner?

Derek Barnes
30 Hughes Street
Regina, Sask.
CANADA S4X 1G9

Madman *Mike Carlin* takes the full blame! And that little corner symbol is an "in-joke," a good-natured poke at the Distinguished Competition!

Dear Marvel,

I have a comment on having Marvel writers and assistant editors appear in Marvel Comics. I find it one of the most childish and egocentric things I've ever seen! Not to mention bad writing. In a nutshell, Marvel characters and Marvel creators cannot exist in the same universe. It is not "cute," it is dumb!

Jonathan E. King
2430 Grove #6
Berkeley, CA 94704

Ulp! Let's try again . . .

Dear Marvel Agers,

What the heck happened? I realize things are probably in an uproar, what with all the editors firing and now hiring a new bunch of assistant editors, but when the whole thing was over, the February-dated comics all have the *next* month's Mighty Marvel Checklist! Then, at a convention in Buffalo, I picked up **NEW MUTANTS #12**, and what did I see? *Last* month's checklist! Then I glanced up at the top of the page and saw . . . *last* month's Bullpen Bulletins! AAAARrghgh!

They found me three days later, a mindless vegetable wearing kangaroo slippers, plastic garbage bags, and a propeller beanie!

Kenneth Cox
6808 Scottsdale Road
East Amherst, NY 14051

There! We *knew* we could find somebody who got into the spirit of the whole thing!

Dear **Jim** and **Mark**,

There's been something bothering me for several years now, namely, loose ends left over from cancelled series. Quite a few characters have been left in limbo in the middle of a storyline, and have never had their full stories resolved. Some have been taken care of in other characters' books, like **Deathlok**, but some, like the **Frankenstein Monster**, the **Golem**, and the **Scarecrow**, have not. I would really like to see some of these plotlines resolved. In particular, I'd really like to see the **Scarecrow** as handled by **Steve Ditko**.

Now I have a suggestion to the readers. I've noticed a tendency for people to write only to books they like. My suggestion is to write to different regular titles, explaining why you do or don't enjoy them. I feel this would offer Marvel a good idea of what the readers really think about all the different titles!

Finally, I'm glad to see fan art in **MARVEL AGE**, and I'd love for the new talent department to be expanded!

George Doro
3919 West 26th Ave.
Denver, CO 80212

Dear People,

Maybe you could take a number of the many characters who have been left in limbo, whose series were never resolved, and put them all in a new team? Instead of "**The Defenders**," you could possibly call such a group "**The Outcasts**" or something similar. There are a lot of such characters still roaming around. What happened to **Nuklo** after being orphaned in **VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH #2**? Did they adopt him, or was he shipped off to **Professor Xavier's** School to be trained as an **X-Man** or something?

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What about **Tigra**, **Poltergeist**, **Daddy Long-Legs**, **Gypsy Moth**, **Wonder Man**, **Modred the Mystic**, **Red Wolf**, **American Eagle**, and the **Overmind**?

Arthur H. Brown
822 8th Avenue North
Saskatoon, Sask.
CANADA S7K 2XZ

Dear Marvel People,

I've recently become a "born again" Marvelite! I quit collecting Marvel comics about two and a half years ago and sold my collection to buy a Trans Am. I am now rebuilding my collection and I'm pleased to say that Marvel comics are more entertaining than ever — as well as being a great investment! Thanks for listening — I'm a Marvel maniac returning forever!

Timothy V. Derr
413 Matlack Ave. Apt. #4
Lewisburg, PA 17837

You're kidding! You actually bought one of those fantastic sports cars by selling off your old Marvels? And now you're back with us to stay! You're living a great life, *Tim* man! By the way, your letter reminded us of the old story about that guy who *sold his* car to buy a copy of *FANTASTIC FOUR* #1!

Dear **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**,

Slow down! After some years of relative calm, you guys are creating more titles than I can keep up with! And there's nothing bad about any of them!

It seems that like good wine, Marvel Comics improve with time. Twenty-two years after its inception, Marvel remains the finest comic book publisher in the world. You've always had the most daring concepts in the field before any of your competitors. And not only are your creations good, but they grow up over the years, like Marvel itself.

Much of this owes itself to **Jim Shooter**. He succeeds in the way **Stan Lee** did, although I confess it took me a while to become familiar with **Shooter's** work. In the sixties, whenever you created something new, it was an instant winner. **Stan Lee** knew just how to incorporate new creations into the Marvel Universe. It wasn't on a conscious level — creating was natural for **Stan**. Now, in the eighties, **Shooter** has helped Marvel reach its maturity. He has succeeded in translating the Marvel creativity and magic into contemporary terms. By "maturity," I mean that **Jim** can keep ahold of the phenomenon, the legend that Marvel is, while still nourishing new dreams, and feeding our imaginations. Sometimes it seems that Marvel improves without being upset by financial or commercial limits.

Marvel is a myth that gets stronger

and more exciting. I enjoy the directions almost all of your Limited Series have taken, and hope that you can keep the same creative teams on these many new titles. Keep listening, and caring, and I'll keep buying.

Stephane Beaumort
21 Rue des Moulins
60330 Silly-le-Long
France

Although space considerations forced us to edit your letter a bit, *Stephane*, everyone appreciated your thoughtful comments about the Marvel myth and magic! It's good to know that the word is spreading on both sides of the Atlantic!

Dear Marvel,

It was nice of you to mention me as the contact person between writer **Steve Englehart** and artist **Charles Truog** for Steve's **COYOTE** in **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE!** Could you please mention that I write two comics titles for the newly-started Capital Comics?

Mike Baron
2809 Century Harbor
Middleton, WI 53562

We don't normally plug comics other than Marvel, Mike, but since you're a good friend, we wouldn't want you to badger us here at the nexus of the Marvel Universe! The best to ya, Mike!

Dear Gang,

I think **MARVEL AGE** is a wonderful idea. It gives me the place to say something I've wanted to say for a long time, but never had anywhere to express it.

I became a Marvel reader when I was a physics major in University — that was ten years ago and I'm still going strong. It has been a rewarding experience becoming part of your special universe. The stories are exciting, amusing, and often touching. Thanks to your gifted staff, the characters come alive. And in the world as it is today, we can all use a few more heroes. There is still an empty space where **Adam Warlock** and **Mar-Vell** once lived. For them and all the others, thank you!

P. Lonergan
3 Cresta Circle #6
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear **Jim** and company,

Please do something permanent with your **Hercules** character. His characteristics, both in terms of his imposing physical prowess and subtle comic potential, in addition to your marvelous treatment of ancient mythology, constitute a considerable value and would be suited well for a permanent book.

Gentlemen, it is clear that there is more potential in **Hercules** than there is in **Thor**. He is better known to the general public, and the character shades that of the **Thunder God** easily. Don't lose this chance to provide your public with both a commercial and artistic triumph.

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Of course, the contribution of **Bob Layton** to such an endeavor would go without question, as he seems to have captured the wonder and splendor of the character so well. I congratulate him, and you, for coming out with the second **HERCULES Limited Series**, and I can hardly wait for Hercules to be a permanent addition to your roster.

Jose Gomez Rivera
221 Summer Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104

We couldn't agree with you more, *Jose*, that *Herc* is a fantastic character, and *Bob Layton* writes and draws his adventures like nobody else! But we can't wait for the reactions of legions of *Thor* fans to your statement that *Herc* overshadows the Thunder God! Hoooo boy!

Dear Marvel Geniuses.

Just had to tell you that your newest sensation, the Top Ten, is an excellent addition to your magazine. Glad to see you're always coming out with something new and interesting.

Steve Wescott
Whitley, Ontario
CANADA

The Top Ten is a big hit already! Thanks, also, to *Vincent Ruscavage* of Pittsburgh, Pa., for *his* vote of approval!

And now for something completely different . . .

Dear **Jim**,

Some of my worst fears were confirmed when I saw "The Rising Sun" on the cover of **MARVEL AGE #11!** Just when I thought that it was safe to read Marvel Comics again, what happens? You send **Wolverine** right back to Japan!

I thought this samurai-chop-suey-ninja-die-by-the-sword-of-honor stuff went out the window with **Frank Miller** and his home movies of Tokyo! *Give me a break!*

Wolverine is from Canada! How about giving him an adventure there! If the Marvel staff is so in love with all this sushi stuff, let 'em all go live in Japan! **Louise Jones's** "I love the orient" gush made me sick! Let's have some good action right here in the good old U. S. of A!

I believe that **Chris Clarmont's** mind has turned into raw fish! Let a real writer like **Ralph Macchio** take over. Let's get **Wolverine** back to being a real fighter and dump all of this disciplined warrior crap!

If this stuff isn't stopped now, the next thing ya know, Marvel will have a comic called "**GODZILLA MEETS CLAREMONT, O'NEIL, MILLER AND JONES!**"

Frank Duke Logan
Winterset, W.V.

Oh, yeah? *Yeah*? Them's fightin' words, *Frank Duke*! (Though to be perfectly honest, the idea of a comic starring *Godzilla, Chris, Denny, Frank*, and *Weezie* strikes us just fine!)

So, 'til *Wolverine* trades in his adamantium claws for a set of chopsticks, all of you face front! ●

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